

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. William Johnstone
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

Christmas 2021

All of us are very different: our circumstances and traditions, the people with whom we share our lives and our ages. What do you think of when you see or hear that word 'CHRISTMAS' ? In the press we have been told that Christmas 2021 has not been 'lost' - what does that mean? Let's take time to reflect on this.

In my family as I grew up, I remember the lovely smells of the kitchen on Christmas Day: the turkey in the oven with my Dad's sausage and chestnut stuffing, the curries and pilau from our Goan heritage, the Christmas sweets with hints of India and Portugal. For us the Crib given by my uncle to Mum and Dad had pride of place in our front room from which passers-by could see it when illuminated. When we left Nairobi in 1968, the Carmelite nuns gave my parents a musical candle holder with angels and the melody of Silent Night. We would always play this and light the candle at Christmas when we would pray the Rosary at the Crib. There was so much to get ready with decorations and tidying up! My parents had grown up with the tradition of new clothes for Christmas and so this was the case for us. My brothers and I would serve at Midnight Mass after which there would be a great catching up with family and friends for quite a while. Only once or twice can I recall snow being on the ground. On Christmas evening our wider family would come round and there'd be snacks and the singing of carols. We'd go to bed exhausted but so happy.

Life can't always be like that. We grow older and sadly loved ones are no longer with us. Some of the time-consuming traditions do not need to be honoured as in the past and fresh approaches break in and become our new norm. Covid has taught us to adapt - even at the last minute. And Covid has revealed to us something new which is possible in celebrating the Birth of Christ.

Over my years as priest, I have been opened up to diverse traditions and I have created new ones too! The constant is Christ who comes to us as we are and whatever we face. The eternal love of God and his compassion on humanity is the thread running through Christmas. The ways we celebrate - new and old - signify that he matters to us and echo how much we are treasured by him. We will NEVER lose Christmas! Jesus Christ is the Saviour born for us and for humanity!

If you are going away, stay safe and come back renewed. If you are a visitor in one of our parishes, we wish you a warm welcome and a happy stay. For the community of our parishes, thank you for your presence, prayers and example. This is Fr. William's first Christmas as priest and in our Garden City. He and I wish you every blessing this Christmas. It is a privilege and a joy to serve you; I feel so fortunate to be in your midst. Happy Christmas with peace, health and hope in 2022!

With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

THANK YOU to all who have helped with preparing our churches for Christmas with the Christmas trees and outdoor decorations, with cleaning the churches, polishing silver and brass and putting up the Cribs and arranging flowers. We are grateful to all who have enriched the Liturgy with music and song, with ministries of welcome, reading, distributing Holy Communion. There has been much activity behind the scenes which keeps everything going! Generosity has also been shown in the packing of hampers for the elderly and their distribution, in the 'Giving Tree' vouchers for refugee families. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul continue to do sterling work in supporting many in need; the CWL and Catenians fundraise and look after their older members. There are many of you who look after neighbours and others who are vulnerable; in this time of pandemic, this ministry has been crucial. Thank you. Fr. William and Fr. Norbert would like to express their thanks to you for your gifts, cards and good wishes; there is also the encouragement and support you give to your priests. **THANK YOU!**

FEAST DAYS The Holy Family falls on 26th December and Our Lady's is New Year's Day. God's blessings on our parishes!

NEWSLETTER The printed newsletter takes us to the Baptism of the Lord (8th/9th January). The next online and printed newsletter will be available 15th/16th January.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES Please consider setting up a standing order for the church you attend; this will guarantee income to support all that happens. There are forms for each parish; these can be used even if you are not a tax-payer. Just to be clear: **YOU** set up the standing order with your bank (right hand part of form) and return the left-hand side to us so that we can claim back GiftAid if tax is paid. DONA has arrived and has been installed in each of our churches. This is a machine for contactless payments to be made to the particular parish in which the machine is sited. It should be possible to GiftAid your donation. We are so grateful to you for your generosity in giving to our parishes especially in the time of pandemic. Not having to worry about money makes a huge difference to Fr. Norbert as your Parish Priest!!!

VISITOR Monsignor John Kallarackal who works at the Apostolic Nunciature in Wimbledon has family here in Welwyn Garden City and has asked to join us for some of the Christmas Masses. We are delighted to be able to welcome him to our churches and to offer him our hospitality albeit for a few days. Nowadays whenever a priest comes in this way, a testimonial is required to satisfy Church and Safeguarding guidelines. The Papal Nuncio has given the appropriate documentation and the Vicar General has concurred. We look forward to Fr. John's arrival!

Bishop Paul McAleenan has also asked to celebrate Christmas Mass in WGC; so, we look forward to welcoming him as well.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION On the parish website wgc-catholics.org.uk there are forms for parents to download to enrol children and young people for these Sacraments. First Communion children should be at least in Year 3 at school and Confirmation candidates in at least Year 9. Preparation will begin after the February half-term in 2022 with the Sacraments being celebrated next summer. The enrolment forms will help us to know how many are involved and to plan the respective preparation courses.

Now Accepting Contactless Donations

You will find our new DIGITAL COLLECTION PLATE, contactless terminal in the church. Just use your contactless debit/credit card or smart phone/ device to make a donation.

Simply choose the amount you wish to donate and hold your card onto the reader.

You can also opt-in for Gift Aid to increase your donation by 25%. If you are a UK taxpayer then donating with Gift Aid means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 received.

Contactless donations are simple to administer, secure and convenient.

ADULTS WHO WISH TO JOIN THE CHURCH (RCIA) Please contact Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 in the first place. 4 people have made contact ; so, we will start the sessions of the RCIA journeying towards Easter on **Monday 10th January at 7.30pm in the Sacristy of Our Lady's**. If anyone else is interested in joining the Catholic Church or if you are an adult who missed out on Confirmation when younger, please call Fr. Norbert as soon as possible!

MARY'S MEALS is a charity which provides meals for children across the world so that they do not go to school hungry. At the moment there is match-funding for any donations received. Why not double your giving at no extra cost? marysmeals.org.uk/donate or 0800 6981212

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. William are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let them know. Donations for the Masses should be put in an envelope and given to Fr. Norbert or Fr. William or popped through the letterbox of one of the presbyteries. The intentions celebrated will be published in the newsletter as below. This week Masses have been celebrated for: Mary Dolby RIP 70th Anniv, Simon Francis Birthday Intention, Tom and Nancy Hogan RIP, Paula Glover's Intention, Tracey Laycock RIP, Josie Bell RIP, Fr. Norbert (in thanksgiving), Tereza D'Souza, Agnelo D'Souza: special intention, Eddie Devine RIP Anniv, Patrick McEvoy.

MASS IN WGC The times of weekday and weekend Masses have now returned to the usual schedule in our three churches. Mass intentions can be booked in all three churches. **The safety and security of all people is important** which means that **distancing** in the benches and going up to Holy Communion is respected, **face coverings** are now required in law and the **sanitising** of hands continues. Please note space is at a premium in St. Bonaventure's because of its size.

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, 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.

TRANSPORT TO MASS If any parishioners need a lift to Mass the Transport to Mass Group is there! If anyone can offer a lift, please contact Kay Mason on 01707 335633. All necessary safeguarding and health and safety guidelines will be followed. Your help would be much appreciated.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral takes place at 12 noon every Friday. It is back in the Lady Chapel and all are welcome.

RED BOXES/MISSIO Any money collected or which you wish to donate can be sent by cheque payable to Missio-Mill Hill to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU or online missio.org.uk/redbox

Or by text REDBOX 5 (to donate £5) or REDBOX 10 (to donate £10) to 70085

Or by phone 020 7821 9755 (office hours)

Or by Bank Transfer: Account Name Missio, Sort Code 16-00-16, Account number 10824230

Your generosity has made such a difference and supports the work of the Missions.

Thank you!

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE On the parish website wgc-catholics.org.uk there is form to download requesting a Certificate of Catholic Practice. Please fill it out and return to Fr. Norbert at Our Lady's and he will prepare the document and return to the family. Thank you.

If you need a Baptismal Certificate for your child, please contact Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579.

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. New Zion is very grateful for the financial support being received.

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals can all take place.

Baptisms If you are thinking about the Baptism of your child, contact Fr. Norbert or Fr. William to arrange a date.

Weddings 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 No limits on numbers.

SCRIPTURE READINGS BEGINNING 24TH DECEMBER

Friday 24th December

VIGIL MASS

Isaiah 62:1-5 'The Lord takes delight in you.

Acts 13:16-17,22-25 Jesus, whose coming was heralded by John the Baptist'

Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph names the baby Jesus. The child is Emmanuel - God-with-us.

NIGHT MASS

Isaiah 9:1-7 There is a child born for us

Titus 2:11-14 Patient hope, waiting for the Appearing of the glory of Christ.

Luke 2:1-14 the Sign: a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Saturday 25th December

DAWN MASS

Isaiah 62:11-12 'Look, your Saviour comes!'

Titus 3:4-7 The Holy Spirit is generously poured upon us.

Luke 2:15-20 The shepherds see the child with Mary and Joseph and return glorifying God for everything they had seen and heard.

MASS DURING THE DAY

Isaiah 52:7-10 The beauty of the one who brings good news, heralds peace and brings happiness.

Hebrews 1:1-6 God has spoken to us through his Son who is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature.

John 1:1-18 The Word: the Son who is nearest to the Father's heart, makes him known.

Sunday 26th December HOLY FAMILY

Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6,12-14 Respect for parents

or 1 Samuel 1:20-22,24-28 Hannah makes her child Samuel over to the Lord

Colossians 3:12-21 Community and family relationships

1 John 3:1-2,21-24 We are children of God!

Luke 2:41-52 12-year-old Jesus goes missing and is found in the Temple

Monday 27th December ST. JOHN Apostle and Evangelist

1 John 1:1-4 The Word - heard, seen, watched and touched

John 20:2-8 On entering the Empty Tomb, the Beloved Disciple sees and believes

Tuesday 28th December THE HOLY INNOCENTS Martyrs

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

Matthew 2:13-18 The slaughter of the innocents

Wednesday 29th December ST. THOMAS BECKET (1118-1170) Archbishop of Canterbury martyred in his Cathedral. Patron Saint of Parish Clergy in this country.

Colossians 1:24-29 Christ's suffering

Luke 22:24-30 Who is the greatest among the disciples?

or Matthew 10:28-33 Do not be afraid...declare yourself for Christ.

Thursday 30th December OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

1 John 2:12-17 Anyone who does the will of God remains for ever.

Luke 36-40 Anna comes by at just that moment and speaks of Christ to others

Friday 31st December OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

1 John 2:18-21 You have been anointed by the Holy One and have received the knowledge

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

Saturday 1st January 2022 MARY MOTHER OF GOD

Numbers 6:22-27 The Lord's blessing on his people

Galatians 4:4-7 God's Son - born of a woman

Luke 2:16-21 Mary treasures all she heard and ponders it in her heart

Sunday 2nd January SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2,8-12 Wisdom takes root in a privileged people

Ephesians 1:3-6,15-18 May God give you a spirit of wisdom and perception

John 1:1-18 The Son who is nearest to the Father's heart, makes him known

Monday 3rd January

1 John 2:29-3:6 Think of the love God has lavished on us

John 1:29-34 John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God on whom the Spirit descended

Tuesday 4th January

1 John 3:7-10 Be holy just as he is holy.

John 1:35-42 'Come and see!'

Wednesday 5th January

1 John 3:11-21 The lesson of love

John 1:43-51 'We have found the Messiah!'

Thursday 6th January THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Isaiah 60:1-6 Lift up your eyes and look round...

Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6 The mystery revealed to everyone

Matthew 2:1-12 The Magi worship Jesus and offer gifts

Friday 7th January

1 John 3:22-4:6 Believe in the name of Jesus Christ and love one another

Matthew:12-17,23-25 Light shines in Galilee as Jesus preaches teaches and heals.

Saturday 8th January

1 John 4:7-10 God's love for us

Mark 6:34-44 Another revelation - the Feeding of the 5000

Sunday 9th January THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7 God's chosen one who is the light of the nations

or Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11 Here is your God!

Acts 10:34-38 God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power

or Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 The cleansing water of rebirth

Luke 3:15-16,21-22 Jesus after his baptism is at prayer

Monday 10th January First Week of Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 1:1-8 The sadness of Hannah

Mark 1:14-20 The beginning of Jesus' ministry and the calling of the first disciples

Tuesday 11th January

1 Samuel 1:9-20 Hannah prays to the Lord

Mark 1:21-28 The teaching of Jesus makes a deep impression on them

Wednesday 12th January

1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20 'Here I am, Lord...Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'

Mark 1:29-39 After a long day, Jesus gets up early to pray

Thursday 13th January

1 Samuel 4:1-11 The Ark of the Covenant is captured.

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

Friday 14th January

1 Samuel 8:4-7,10-22 The people insist that they want a king so they can be like the other nations.

Mark 2:1-12 The paralytic brought to Jesus by his friends has his sins forgiven and is healed.