

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

Fourth Sunday of Easter 3rd May 2020

Today the Church invites us to think about Jesus our Good Shepherd who knows and cares for his flock. We rejoice that God has given us a calling and has a purpose for each one of us in life. The passage of St. John's Gospel proclaimed at Mass has Jesus saying specifically that he is the 'Gate' of the sheepfold; he is the way of entry and exit, offering life in all its fullness. Perhaps you might take time today to reflect on what it means for you to belong to Jesus Christ as a member of his flock? The fact he knows you by name and that he wants you to recognise his voice - what difference does that make to who you are and how you respond to him? Do you believe that he gives you freedom, trusting you to accept his offer of eternal life? Where is he in the midst of the crisis we are living through?

Last Sunday night I had a call from someone I first met nearly thirty years ago. He had trained as a nurse, marrying another nurse and we had kept in touch. He told me that he had the coronavirus and that it was likely to take a turn for the worse and he could not predict how things would turn out. I really had to listen! Finding words of hope and comfort, offering the riches of our faith, feeling sadness that this former parishioner-turned-friend was at a crunch moment in life, praying with him on the phone...these were aspects of priesthood which I never would have expected when I started out nearly 32 years ago. On Thursday I received a message to say he had started to improve - what a relief!

I have always had the conviction of God's calling to me and the enormity of what he demands. But it is only in the reality of what life brings that I have truly learned what it means to be the Lord's priest and to be at the service of my people.

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When I was involved in a major car accident in Tanzania back in 1994, I had to spend 6 months convalescing. I had come so close to death and yet lived to tell the tale, aware that the Lord had more in store for me! Now with lockdown and unable to minister in a public way, again I have been called back to the roots of the vocation I responded to when still a boy. As I celebrate Mass in an empty church, I try to picture all of you from the three churches in your favourite seats, superimposed on the empty benches of Our Lady's. We have shared so much over the years and now God give us an even greater challenge to be true to our calling as a Catholic Christian community unable to gather and yet aware of, and in close communion with, each other and the Lord.

We rightly give thanks to God for the sacrifice and care of frontline workers whose dedication is beyond compare. And yet each of you has your own 'frontline' - people, circumstances and places where you are called to give of yourself and make a difference. It might appear small and insignificant at times but remember how this loving care harnessed is transforming. Our vocations lived out to the glory of God and served to the best of our abilities reveal that we belong and that we are destined for the fullness of life in heaven of which God gives us a taste here on earth.

With Fr. Tony, I ask God to bless you and strengthen you with wisdom, energy and determination. Have a good week and stay safe. **Fr. Norbert**

LIVESTREAMING

We are live-streaming using the YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMRar5c56VdIMK7v7aQLaRg/>

We are going to try recording the Sunday Mass earlier in the morning and then stream it on the YouTube channel at 10am.

Our channel has an easier name/link (the one above is still valid but more complicated!)

[youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches)

FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/Welwyn-Garden-City-Catholic-Churches-113038463699672/>

We have a Facebook page for our three parishes. Please search for 'Welwyn Garden City Catholic Churches' to find us. There are Gospel reflections, the latest news, live rosaries and so on. Do 'like' this page so that any updates appear in your own news feed, and share it with your friends too!

SIGNED MASS Fr. Norbert was due to celebrate Mass with the Deaf at the Cathedral on Sunday 3rd at 4.30pm. The Deaf Service has recorded a Signed Mass with a 'split screen' for Shell Roca, Director of the Deaf Service, to respond and interpret. This will go live on our YouTube channel at 4.30pm this Sunday. *It is a first attempt, lighting needs to be improved but we are giving it a go!*

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.

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. Tony are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. On Sundays the Mass is offered for the 'People of our Parishes'. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let Fr. Norbert know. Donations for the Masses can be made at a later stage.

This week Masses have been celebrated for Renate Kempe RIP, Peter Byrne RIP, John Lawrence RIP, Brian Hall RIP, Harry McCallion RIP, Brian Davidson RIP Anniv, Jimmy Byrne RIP, Eileen Percival RIP, Jimmy Byrne RIP, John Dever RIP, Intentions of friends and family of Coyle Family.

PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

Funeral Services will only be conducted at the graveside or at crematorium until further notice with only immediate family attending.

Anne Inge RIP

Jim Henry RIP

George Jones RIP

Roger Francis RIP father of Rachael Newman-Sanders

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, FIRST COMMUNIONS, WEDDINGS are now on hold until the situation changes.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES Some parishioners contribute regularly through standing orders; for this we are grateful. A number of parishioners have asked about their planned giving envelopes and weekly collection contributions. We have set up for each of our parishes Virgin Money Giving pages which allow you to make a donation which can also be GiftAided. This can also be done on your mobile phone. The links are on the parish website. We wish to thank those of you who will be able to offer support in this way. We are also acutely aware of the financial hardship which the present circumstances of pandemic have created for so many and respect totally the fact that some of you are now unable to make contributions. God bless you all.

HELP DURING TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

We now have a team of people who are happy to do shopping, collect prescriptions, chat on the phone, etc. If you need any such help, please do contact Fr Tony, and he will put you in contact with someone who can assist you. Fr Tony can be reached on 01707 327434, or at tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk.

FOOD BANK

New Zion Christian Fellowship continues its Food Bank every Wednesday 9 - 11 am. Unfortunately with our churches now closed, we cannot collect items each week. 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.

SPECIAL MASSES will be livestreamed from Cathedrals in this country every Thursday evening at 7 o'clock for the intentions of frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families. This week from Leeds Cathedral celebrated by Bishop Marcus Stock.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

This commemoration of Victory in Europe is such an important day in our Nation's history. On Friday 8th there will be a message from Her Majesty The Queen and a two-minute silence at 11 o'clock. Here are some links you might find useful: <https://ve-vjday75.gov.uk> www.rbl.org.uk/veday75

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 3RD MAY

Why not take out your Bible and reflect on these passages? Or do a Google search!

Saturday 2nd May St. Athanasius (295-373) Bishop of Alexandria and Doctor of the Church

Acts 9:31-42 Peter's ministry of healing

John 6:60-69 Many people will not accept the Lord's teaching on the Bread of Life.

Peter says to Jesus 'You have the message of eternal life.'

Sunday 3rd May FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:14, 36-41 Peter is asked by the crowd 'What must we do?'

1 Peter 2:20-25 Through Christ's wounds we have been healed

John 10:1-10 Jesus said 'I am the gate of the sheepfold...I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.'

Monday 4th May THE ENGLISH MARTYRS (1535-1685) 42 Saints and 242 declared Blessed

Acts 7:55-60 The stoning of Stephen

Matthew 10:17-20 Jesus foretells the future suffering of his followers but assures them that the Spirit of his Father will speak in them.

Tuesday 5th May

Acts 11:19-26 Barnabas and Saul teach in Antioch where the disciples are first called 'Christians'.

John 10:22-30 The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice

Wednesday 6th May

Acts 12:24 - 13:5 Barnabas and Saul travel further with the Good News

John 12:44-50 Jesus says he is the light who has come into the world

Thursday 7th May

Acts 13:13-25 Paul and his friends travel to many places

John 13:16-20 After washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper, Jesus starts his long discourse

Friday 8th May

Acts 13:26-33 Paul says: 'We have come to tell you the Good News.'

John 14:1-6 Jesus says: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled.'