

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

Fourteenth Sunday of the Year 5th July 2020

I was ordained a deacon 33 years ago *today*! It was a Sunday and took place at Westminster Cathedral. It was Bishop John Crowley's first set of ordinations since becoming a Bishop the previous December and I remember it was a hot day. There was so much emotion as I realised the full impact of what I was undertaking with the promises of celibacy and obedience to the Cardinal, as well as promising to pray the 'Office'...and all of these for the rest of my life. I walked from the Seminary in Chelsea to Westminster with two of my friends and burst into tears when my parents arrived with my brothers. When Bishop John laid hands on my head conferring Diaconate, they felt like braziers branding me with a great gift. And now 33 years later, I am in Welwyn Garden City in a world overtaken by pandemic and caught up in 'lockdown'! I was ordained deacon to proclaim the Gospel and assist at the altar; I was able to preach, baptise and officiate at Weddings and Funerals. So much has been stripped away with the current crisis.

Today's Gospel passage from St. Matthew was proclaimed on that same day in very different circumstances and in such a unique place. The Gospel is for every place and situation. The Good News feeds us, builds us up, is thought-provoking and challenging, affirming and life-giving. It is about Jesus Christ, God-with-us, who is Saviour and stays with us to the end of time. The Gospel should be mulled over so that each time we hear or read a passage, we are opened up to something extra and put in touch with the Someone who loves us beyond measure.

I was fancifully wondering earlier today what it would have been like sharing lockdown with Jesus! Imagine spending every moment in his company. Would I have been able to take the intensity of his presence? Would I have found the 'right' words to utter? Would I have had the patience to listen intently to him? What would sitting at table with him have felt like or sharing a drink? How would he have responded to the easing of lockdown? Perhaps you might reflect too?

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In today's Gospel Jesus says: 'Come to me...Shoulder my yoke...learn from me.' What an invitation! The Lord wants us to lay upon him whatever weighs us down; he has the strength to take upon himself our burdens. By allowing him to share a yoke with us, we have him at our side every step of the way. Christ is a brilliant teacher because his example is a living witness of all he desires us to learn. As we grow closer to him, we get to know God our Father; as we discover more and more of the divine, we become the people God has always wanted us to be. It takes time. There's no shortcut. The goal is eternal life!

So today ponder your 'calling' and rediscover the intimate presence of God. Try to tease out what has unfolded in this time of pandemic which will help you for the future. Find ways of living out the lessons you have learned. Maybe even one person might be helped?

Please continue to pray for Fr. Tony and for me as we endeavour to serve you and the Lord with our whole being. You and your loved ones are in our hearts! God bless you. With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Fr. Norbert writes: Fr. Tony and I have spent some time reflecting on how we can respond to the Government's permission for Mass to be celebrated in public in the light of the guidelines published by the Bishops' Conference. It is complicated and a minefield of restrictions! I had hoped to have outdoor Mass but there has been so much rain recently!

At the heart of everything is keeping people safe and confident in coming to church. Moreover, we want to make Mass accessible to as many people as possible. So we have taken the decision for two weeks to trial the following:

Saturday 11th/18th July

10am Mass at Holy Family

6pm Mass at Our Lady's

Sunday 12th /19th July

10am Mass at Our Lady's

6pm Mass at Holy Family

Monday 13th/20th July

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

Tuesday 14th/21st July

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Thursday 16th/23rd July

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday 17th/24th July

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

St. Bonaventure's - as a building - is small and would not hold many people in present circumstances. We reckon Holy Family would take around 70 people and Our Lady's 80. Both churches also have car parks which is an important consideration.

The Bishops have made it very clear that the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass has been suspended and they ask people to consider coming to ONE MASS PER WEEK to allow others a chance to attend Mass. So, if a weekday morning works well, come on Tuesday or Thursday. If you can come after the working day, choose Monday or Friday evening. If these days are out of the question, then opt for a weekend Mass. But please only ONE. The Cardinal speaks of Catholics having to make a 'sacrifice' in the current situation. This will have to be the case here in Welwyn Garden City.

Mass will be different! As you arrive there will be stewards outside to make sure people respect distancing. Stewards will sanitise hands on entry. More stewards will lead you to places. People will have to sit in their 'bubbles', that is as couples, families or households. We have single chairs for individuals. We ask that you only sit or stand in your place and do not use the kneeler. Once the church has reached its capacity, we would not be allowed to admit any more. Parents are asked to keep a watchful eye on their children at all times. Remember toilets will not be available. The galleries in both churches will not be open. There will not be Mass-books or printed newsletters. Give yourselves time to park and prepare to enter the church - arrive EARLY!

The structure of the Mass will be simplified so that people are not in an enclosed place for longer than 30 minutes: no singing or music, no Second Reading or Bidding Prayers, no Gloria or Creed, no collection, Offertory procession or Sign of Peace, no Communion from the Chalice, no altar servers, no lighting of votive candles. At the time of Holy Communion, the priest will say to the whole congregation 'The Body of Christ' to which you will all respond 'Amen'. Only the priest will receive at that point. After the Blessing and Dismissal, stewards will guide people from their benches to the front of the sanctuary, keeping distance at all times. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion may only receive in the hand with no words uttered by priest or communicant and then you will leave the church - in Holy Family by the doors either side of the sanctuary, and in Our Lady's by the side door on the left and by the 'Holy Door' at the back on the right. Even those not receiving Holy Communion must follow this flow. As you exit the church, the stewards will sanitise your hands. We have been told that you cannot congregate outside but must make your way home. We ask you to respect the stewards who are your fellow parishioners and will be doing their best to facilitate the whole process.

Only the priest will prepare the vessels for Mass and the ciboria (with hosts) will have their lids on until Holy Communion is distributed at the end.

After each Mass there will have to be cleaning teams to sanitise everything which has had human contact and to prepare the church for the next Mass. Any property left behind will be disposed of. Priests have been told not to greet their people for the sake of everyone's protection. We have purchased masks, plastic aprons and gloves for stewards and cleaners as well as sufficient sanitising and cleaning materials. You do not have to wear a mask. If you want to, bring your own.

So there we are!! In the course of a week a huge number of people will be able to have access to Mass in Welwyn Garden City. We hope that anyone entering our churches will trust that Fr. Tony and I have done all we can to keep you safe and have a holy encounter with the Lord in the Eucharist. We will review at the end of the two-week trial. We think that this schedule is sustainable for a longer period and allows for one priest to keep things going should the other be unwell or take a break. In the meantime, there will still be Wednesday's Facebook Mass at 9.30am and Sunday's 'full' Mass streamed at 10 o'clock (but recorded earlier!) Some of you may not feel ready to return because of health issues or because you care for someone who is vulnerable. Others might still be afraid and this is totally understandable. If you think you have the virus, please do NOT come and put others at risk.

At each Mass we will need 8 stewards and a team of cleaners. *That is a big ask.* Think carefully about the day and time of Mass and see what you can offer. We really need YOUR help. Send your name to Fr. Tony or me and we will put together a rota. It would help us hugely at this initial stage if you could commit to these first two weeks; that will help establish a routine and identify any issues which should be addressed.

PRIVATE PRAYER This week Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert want to focus on preparing for public Masses, so we will not be opening the churches as has been the case in the last few weeks. We are so grateful to those who helped with stewarding and sanitising the benches in this period.

CONFESSION The Cardinal reminds all Catholics that in order to receive Holy Communion, a 'good' Act of Contrition will suffice and then to find an opportunity at a later stage to go to Confession. On the days when public Mass is celebrated, Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert will NOT be able to hear Confessions before or after Mass. However, this week Fr. Tony (01707 327434) will be available for Confession on Tuesday 7th July at Holy Family and Fr. Norbert (01707 323234) on Friday 10th July at Our Lady's. You are asked to telephone whichever priest to make an appointment. Confession will be outside the church building with priest and penitent standing; every attempt will be made to keep distance and reduce the risk of infection either way, while respecting the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The church will NOT be open for prayer after. We ask you to have patience and generosity of spirit if things get complicated time-wise!

LIVESTREAMING

We are live-streaming using the YouTube channel:
[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!

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.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Children's Liturgy Team at Our Lady's will have a session on Zoom for children this Sunday after the streamed Mass goes out. There will be a song with actions, Gospel reading and an activity. For more information, please contact Sarah (david.cafferty@ntlworld.com) or Eddy (eddyga@hotmail.com). Whichever parish you attend, why not give it a go?

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 Mary Davin RIP, Sebastiano Scarso RIP, Stefan Jurek RIP, Pauline Ifeoma Onwuachu (80th birthday), Fr. Michael Leathem, Mary Wall RIP, Fr. Bill McConalogue RIP, Michael Maher RIP Anniv.

PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

Mary Wall RIP (Mary Brannan's mother)

Joseph Pais RIP

As well as praying for the repose of the souls of all who have died, let us remember the many bereaved families at this sad time of pandemic.

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, FIRST COMMUNIONS will be celebrated in due course, when permission is given.

WEDDINGS are allowed, with limited numbers present.

FUNERALS with very limited numbers will be permitted in church. *There will still be the possibility graveside or crematorium services.*

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 - 11am. 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.

SIGNED MASS Fr. Norbert has been asked to celebrate a Signed Mass for the Deaf Service of our Diocese. This will be streamed on our YouTube channel on Sunday 5th July at 4.30pm when it would have taken place at the Cathedral.

ST. ALBANS MASS In our part of Hertfordshire we have such an outstanding and historical building as St. Albans Abbey / Cathedral. It was founded in the 8th Century and is the Shrine of Britain's first saint and martyr, and is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in this country. The other very unusual aspect of the life of this Church of England Abbey is that Catholic Mass is celebrated there every week. There is no other example of this anywhere in the UK. It has taken place ever since 1983. Worship will resume again and the next Catholic Mass will be celebrated on **Friday 17th July at 12 noon** in the Nave. Why not give it a try? The celebration is a very prayerful occasion. Because the Nave is so extensive there is no problem about distancing. Just enter by the Welcome Entrance.

FILIPINO MASS Saturday's 6pm Mass would have been led for us by our Filipino community. On the YouTube channel you will find one of their songs in Tagalog and a few pictures of Masses in the past.

CIVIC AWARDS 2020 Two of our parishioners received Civic Awards recently. **Daisy Cooper** - The Young Person Award presented by the University of Hertfordshire in recognition of her contribution to Scouts and Beavers. **Janet Lewis** - The Civic Award presented in recognition of the work undertaken during her long commitment to the Welwyn Garden City Society of St Vincent De Paul. *CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH! We are so proud of you.*

FR. BILL RIP This Saturday (5th) would have been Fr. Bill McConalogue's Golden Jubilee of Priesthood. He was raised in Welwyn Garden City, attending St. Bonaventure's as a child. He was ordained priest at Our Lady's. He became Parish Priest of Holy Family and died in post in 2009. Mass has been celebrated for him. May he rest in peace.

ST. BONAVENTURE'S STONE CROSS Back in January the Health and Safety review of our churches revealed that the stone cross at the top of St. Bonaventure's has moved and the recommendation was for it to be stabilised and strengthened. The work is being carried out.

NEW PARISH CENTRE The builders have been able to continue with the work these last few months and our new Parish Centre is taking shape inside with the underfloor heating in place, the walls plastered and the grounds being landscaped. It looks splendid and should be completed by the end of July.

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 Liverpool Cathedral, celebrated by Bishop Tom Williams (Auxiliary).

www.clicktopray.org is a free app which links you with thousands of people on the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and is co-ordinated by the Jesuits. Each day there are phrases or inspirational thoughts to accompany you in your prayer.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 5TH JULY

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

Saturday 4th July St. Elizabeth of Portugal (1271 - 1336) *Queen who when widowed devoted her life to the prayer and the poor*

Amos 9:11-15 'I mean to restore the fortunes of my people Israel'

Matthew 9:14 -17 New wine!

Sunday 5th July FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Zechariah 9:9-10 'See, your king comes to you'

Romans 8:9, 11-13 Life in the Spirit

Matthew 11:25 - 30 'Come to me'

Monday 6th July St. Maria Goretti (1890 - 1902) *Virgin Martyr*

Hosea 2:16, 17-18, 21-22 God is betrothed to his people

Matthew 9:18 - 26 The healing power of Jesus

Tuesday 7th July

Hosea 8: 4 - 7, 11-13 The people are unfaithful to God

Matthew 9:32 - 37 Jesus has compassion on the people

Wednesday 8th July

Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12 'Sow integrity...reap a harvest of kindness...'

Matthew 10:1-7 The names of the Twelve Apostles.

Thursday 9th July St. Augustine Zhao Rong and his Companions *120 Chinese Martyrs between 1648 and 1930*

Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9 God's tender love

Matthew 10:7-15 Jesus sends out the Twelve

Friday 10th July

Hosea 14:2-10 'Come back to the Lord!'

Matthew 10:16-23 The challenges the Twelve will face. The Spirit will be with them