

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*

21st Sunday of the Year 23rd August 2020

‘Who do people say I am?’ is the question put to the disciples by Jesus in today’s Gospel from St. Matthew. The Lord then puts them on the spot by asking them ‘And who do you say I am?’ Peter is their spokesman as he pronounces ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’

During this time of pandemic and lockdown, I am sure that many of you must have wondered about where God’s presence was to be found in the midst of such uncertainty. There are people who through blogs, articles and speeches have tried to offer suggestions as to the ‘why’ of all that has taken place (and is still happening). Not everything has been helpful and the most vulnerable perhaps have felt less secure. Have you heard positive voices? Have you found yourself saying strong, faithful things about God and his presence in your life? Surely that is a response to the second, much more personal question? Jesus does not only call us to know facts about him or to be a mine of information. He wants us to know him in our hearts, in the very fibre of our being; he longs for others to discover him through us and the authenticity of our actions.

Peter was chosen by Christ as a model - not always a perfect model - of what it means to be a disciple. Peter had to keep learning from his mistakes to grow more and more into a faithful and courageous follower of the Lord. That inspires us when we are lost and can find no direction in life. That gives us hope when we let others, ourselves or the Lord down. Peter is the image of a rock which at times appeared to fragment and crumble and yet in the end proved to be as solid as the Lord attested in this passage. Peter picks us up when we trip and hauls us out of the hole we have fallen into. He can do that because he understands how human we are, just as he made mistakes.

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We, in our turn, should learn to be compassionate to people we encounter who are frail and give them a helping hand.

Jesus tells Peter that he is the rock on which he will build his Church. The 'Church' could be thought of as being so solid that it is immovable. It could be perceived as inflexible. It could be regarded as cold and 'lifeless'. *I'm not saying it is!* However, the foundation of Peter with his human, impetuous spirit is a reminder that the Church is made up of living stones - 'real' people - who are on their way to *becoming* a glorious dwelling place for God. What does it mean for you to be a part of this 'building'? Who are you connected to? What weaknesses do you see in the structure? How can you contribute to growth and stability? Now is a crucial time for all of us to play our part in the nurture of 'Church'! Whether you are still not able to come to Mass or whether you have ventured out and are rediscovering the Liturgy, *we all belong*. The Lord Jesus wants us to experience communion with him and others AND to draw in new members. Let us ask God our Father to reveal imaginative ways to us through his Spirit.

Fr. Tony and I ask God to bless you. Have a great week. With much love, **Fr. Norbert**

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY As the Sunday Obligation has been suspended, you are free to come to any of the Masses. There is streamed Mass on Sunday at 10am. There is the capacity for people to come more than once in the week if they wish. ***Face coverings must now be worn.***

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 *NOT on Bank Holiday 31st August*

Tuesday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Thursday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

As you arrive there are stewards outside to make sure people respect distancing and to take contact details (name and phone number which will be held securely for 21 days). Stewards sanitise hands on entry. More stewards lead you to places. People must 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 are not be allowed to admit any more. Parents are asked to keep a watchful eye on their children at all times. Remember toilets are not available. The galleries in both churches will not be open. There are no Mass-books or printed newsletters. Give yourselves time to park and prepare to enter the church - arrive EARLY!

The structure of the Mass has been simplified so that people are not in an enclosed place for longer than 30 minutes: no singing or music, no 2nd 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 says to the whole congregation 'The Body of Christ' to which you all respond 'Amen'. Only the priest receives at that point. After the Blessing and Dismissal, stewards 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 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 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 are doing their best to facilitate the whole process.

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

After each Mass there are cleaning teams to sanitise everything which has had human contact and to prepare the church for the next Mass. Any property left behind has to 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.

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. COVID 19 symptoms: a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature), a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24

hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual), a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

At each Mass last week there were many volunteers who acted as stewards and helped clean afterwards. If you can offer support, please send your name to Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert. As the weeks go by, some may be away so the availability of extra hands would be appreciated.

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, ring Fr. Tony on 01707 327434 or Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 if you would like to make an appointment for Confession. The Sacrament 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!

NEW HALL The ‘practical completion’ of our joint Parish Hall has happened! There are a few jobs to be done in the coming days and then there will be a period of 12 months’ warranty. On Friday the keys were handed over to Fr. Norbert! There have been so many years of preparing the scheme with various plans and alterations. The people of our three parishes have generously supported all that has been undertaken not only in ideas and enthusiasm but also financially. There is a loan which will need to be paid off. In due course we will look at the best ways of approaching this. We have considered many possible names! One put to me not so long ago was ‘The Trinity Hall’. It is a good suggestion as it highlights three (parishes), is explicitly Christian and intimates a reaching out to those around us just as God offers life and love and community to so many. What do you think? Please let me know. For now we can only admire the Hall from a distance. Soon, I pray, we’ll be able to celebrate with a formal opening ceremony and innumerable gatherings. Thank you for your encouragement.

BUILDING WORK St. Bonaventure’s apex stone cross is now secure. It was discovered that the cement on the tower was crumbling and that pigeons had broken in through the wooden slats! All the work has been completed. We are waiting for the scaffolding to be taken down. Our Lady’s Church for many years has needed the windows and tower to be painted externally as well as other repairs. Permission from the Diocese has been given and work has begun. It means that there will be scaffolding on the tower of Our Lady’s. *In due course the three towers of our three churches will be the finest in town!*

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/>

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.

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 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 Josie Dineen RIP, Tom and Nancy Hogan RIP, Josephine and Benedict Farrugia RIP, Bill Keaty RIP, Josie Dineen RIP, Dolly and Prem Sylvester 40th Wedding Anniversary, Sheila Gallagher RIP, Joseph and Maria Carmela Farrugia RIP, Waldemar Schmitt RIP Anniv, Dorothy Collins RIP, John and Maureen McEvoy RIP, Cissie Bargh RIP

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, FIRST COMMUNIONS will be celebrated in due course after the summer.

WEDDINGS are allowed, with limited numbers present.

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

CONGRATULATIONS to Anne-Marie Conway and Ian Duffield who married at Holy Family last Thursday (20th)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES You will note that with public Masses starting again this weekend, we will not be having a collection. Coins and notes are a possible source of infection and transmission of the coronavirus and we do not want to put collectors and counters at risk. Please consider using the Virgin Money Giving links on the parish website. If you would like to set up a standing order, please contact Fr. Norbert and the appropriate forms will be emailed or posted to you. 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 that you consider the best way of giving. Our thanks to you for your generosity and co-operation.

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.

ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL Catholic Mass every Friday at 12 noon in the Nave of the Cathedral.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 23RD AUGUST

Saturday 22nd August Our Lady Mother and Queen

Ezekiel 43:1-7 The glory of God arrives at the Temple

Matthew 23:1-12 'You have one Father and he is in heaven'

Sunday 23rd August TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 22:19-23 '...he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.'

Romans 11:33-36 How rich are the depths of God!

Matthew 16:13-20 'Who do you say I am?'

Monday 24th August ST. BARTHOLOMEW *Apostle*

Apocalypse 21:9-14 The new Jerusalem

John 1:45-51 Nathaniel (Bartholomew) - a man incapable of deceit.

Tuesday 25th August

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 14-17 Love, comfort, hope and strength come from God

Matthew 23:23-26 Woes against the scribes and Pharisees

Wednesday 26th August

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18 'May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you'

Matthew 23:27-32 More woes!

Thursday 27th August St. Monica (331 - 387) *Mother of St. Augustine. Prayed with many tears for the conversion of her son and these prayers were answered. At the end of her life she said to her son, who eventually became a bishop : 'All I ask is that you remember me at the altar of God.'*

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 God, by calling you, has joined you to his Son.

Matthew 24:42-51 Stay awake for the Lord's coming!

Friday 28th August St. Augustine (354 - 430) *Followed many philosophies, lived a wayward life and eventually converted to Christianity and was baptised by St. Ambrose in 387. He became Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. A great teacher, writer and pastor.*

1 Corinthians 1:17-25 Christ is the wisdom and power of God

Matthew 25:1-13 The parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids