

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*

25th Sunday of the Year 20th September 2020

Today we are challenged by a parable like no other! It is so easy to find ourselves complaining ‘It’s not fair!’ echoing the voices of some of the characters in the story. The owner of a vineyard decides to pay the same wage to a range of workers, some of whom did a day’s work and others only an hour’s. The sad tale of heat, toil and exhaustion of the former group dominates their moan! They forget that they received exactly what had been agreed. Imagine the sheer delight (and amazement) of those who received the day’s wage: they had been idle because no one had wanted them. They were finally noticed; they now have money to feed their families AND they have dignity. On which group do you focus your attention? What chorus of words trips off your tongue? ‘Not fair!’ or ‘Amazing!’ How is your life changed or challenged by this passage from St. Matthew?

Remember that many of the people who gathered around Jesus were not the good, saintly or fortunate. The religious folk probably had no need of Jesus or the Good News he proclaimed. Some came to watch him, to catch him out or look for evidence of wrong doing. There were others in his audience (and in St Matthew’s community) who had always done the right thing, heeding the Law and the Prophets and being true and faithful. However, the public sinners found a welcome in the Lord, they really felt accepted, loved and nurtured by God because of the presence of Jesus in their midst. Their lives changed for ever. Even at a late stage in life, despite their way of living, they were embraced by the embodiment of mercy, compassion and forgiveness. The magnetism of Jesus drew them and then helped refocus their lives. Timing was not Jesus’ problem; his protagonists were the ones with issues.

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Today's parable is not about labour laws or trades unions or workers' rights. Surely it is Jesus proudly and humbly telling us 'This is what my Father is like!' The invitation to the Kingdom is waiting for a response right up to the last moment. GOD IS GENEROUS! Jesus wants us as his followers to feel this grace lavished upon us and to bask in the sunshine of God's goodness. In turn he longs for us to give those around us an experience of the self-same love. The Kingdom is not about comparisons or stingy, begrudging sharing; rather a radiant discovery of a God beyond anything we could imagine.

So much in life is now up in the air and it is hard to fathom how it will be in the near future let alone in a year's time. Let us offer each other encouragement and be there for one another in these stressful times. Let us offer prayer and entreaty to God, begging that all may have the support they need and come to a deep knowledge of our amazing and wonderful God. Fr. Tony and I ask God to bless you. Don't forget us in your prayers!

With much love, *Fr. Norbert.*

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.

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 Chris Doocey RIP Anniv, Ellen Castello RIP Birthday, In thanksgiving for birth of Graca Fernandes, Chris Doocey RIP, Hannah Byrne RIP, John and Eileen Ling's Intention (60th Wedding Anniversary)

LATELY DEAD Please pray for the repose of the soul of Hannah Byrne who died recently.

WELCOME to Jasmine Cliffe baptised at Our Lady's and to Harrison Fitzgerald baptised at St. Bonaventure's both on Saturday 19th September.

SACRAMENTS

Below is the latest information for our parishes here in Welwyn Garden City based on Government guidelines and those issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. As you realise many things keep changing with very little notice, so please bear with us. Thank you for your patience!

BAPTISMS of babies and infants can now be arranged. Please contact Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert directly to make arrangements. No more than 30 people can be present.

CONFIRMATIONS These will take place in November. Candidates are being contacted.

FIRST COMMUNIONS Dates have been set for October. Children will be making their First Holy Communion in the three churches at scheduled and 'extra' Masses. *Please note that the Scripture readings on weekdays may be changed to link up with the Sunday.*

WEDDINGS can take place with no more than 30 people present.

FUNERALS with no more than 30 people present are now permitted in church.

RCIA In Welwyn Garden City, the RCIA Group included 13 adults and 6 children for the Sacraments at Easter. Their Baptisms, Confirmations and First Communions will be at scheduled Masses in Our Lady's on Saturday 26th September 6pm, Friday 2nd October 7pm and Saturday 3rd October 6pm.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES We are not having a collection at Mass! 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. However, 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.

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. Fr. Norbert will be the celebrant on 25th September.

CHRISM MASS The Holy Oils were blessed by the Cardinal at Westminster Cathedral last Monday (14th). The Oil of Catechumens prepares an adult or child for Baptism, marking them out and strengthening them. The Oil of the Sick is used to anoint those who are seriously ill or are infirm. The Oil of Chrism is used to anoint children after Baptism, for the Sacrament of Confirmation, at the Ordination of Priests and Bishops and to consecrate churches and altars. Fr. Norbert as the Dean of Stevenage was there and has delivered the Holy Oils to the parishes of our Deanery: Royston, Baldock, Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Stevenage, Knebworth, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.

BLESSING OF GRAVES We are hoping to have the traditional Blessing of Graves in November. Obviously this will be carried out slightly differently because of the coronavirus restrictions. We will keep you informed.

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.

10am Mass at Our Lady's on Sunday 27th September will be a Signed Mass. Sarah Metcalfe from the Deaf Service will be with us to interpret the Mass.

BBC THREE COUNTIES RADIO Fr. Norbert has been asked to share an experience about a wondrous or miraculous event. It should be broadcast this Sunday (20th) at 7.30am. The following Sunday there may be a live interview with Edward Adoo, who was a student at St. Charles Sixth Form College in Ladbroke Grove when Fr. Norbert was his Chaplain. Tune in if you are free!

ORDINATIONS Please pray for the 3 new priests and 3 deacons ordained for our Diocese on Saturday 19th September. There will also be 3 permanent deacons ordained on 31st October.

FR. REMY PIGNALL Congratulations to Remy who was ordained priest in St. Denis, Paris, on Sunday 6th September. He has celebrated many 'First Masses' and hopes one day to be in Welwyn Garden City to do the same. Please keep him in your prayers.

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS With the Secondary School transfer process unfolding, many parents will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity'. Fr. Norbert is working out how best to meet with parents and children while keeping to all the Covid-19 guidelines. He will set up dates in early October. Watch this space!

LORETO COLLEGE Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3RQ **SECONDARY TRANSFER 2021**

This year it is not possible to hold our usual Open Evening. However from Monday 21st September the school website will showcase a variety of materials, including our 'Open Day Film', to help families learn more about us. Please visit our website at www.loreto.herts.sch.uk to access this information.

'Virtual' Open Evening for **NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR** Catholic School will be taking place on Thursday 8th October 2020. nbs.herts.sch.uk for more information.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY Herts Welcomes Refugees is looking for a volunteer to take over as Area Convenor for Welwyn Hatfield. Locally the task is to support our local refugee partners, by helping with requests for items for the home or the children - eg, school uniforms, answering queries and generally helping them to settle into their new communities. Contact Vicky on woodcraftvicky@gmail.com to learn more.

NEW HALL The 'practical completion' of our joint Parish Hall has happened! There has been a favourable response to the suggestion to call the building 'The Trinity Hall'. If you have any thoughts or ideas, please let Fr. Norbert know soon. Let us hope we will be able to make use of it soon!

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY It does not appear to be the case that guidelines regarding the Mass will change in the foreseeable future. So, for the next few months, we will keep to the schedule now established. The Sunday obligation has been dispensed so you are free to attend Mass on any day. There is space too on weekdays for people to come more than once. Mass will continue to be streamed on a Sunday at 10am.

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

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 are not open. There are no Mass-books or printed newsletters. You do not have to 'book' to come, but please 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 the stewards sanitise everything which has had human contact and 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/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.

We are very grateful to the many volunteers who have helped as stewards and spent time cleaning the churches after Mass. Some have now returned to work. If any others are available on a weekday or at the weekend, please let Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert know. Thank you.

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!

SEASON OF CREATION

from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4th October (Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi).

This ecumenical season is dedicated to prayer and action for the protection of creation. It is a time to renew our relationships with God our Creator, and with all creation, as we join together in prayer. We are invited to give thanks for all that God has made, repent for the damage that we have caused and commit ourselves to take action to protect the earth our common home. This year we have been made acutely aware of how interconnected we all are, and so we come together in hope that we can rebuild and heal our world.

CAFOD has produced a novena to St Francis that can be used as a beautiful song of penitence and praise, guiding us to care for the earth and for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, especially the people of the Amazon. Visit this website for the full list of videos of the prayers <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Novena-to-St-Francis>

Below for two prayers each week:

Third prayer: Wind and air

"We praise you, Lord, for Brothers Wind and Air,
fair and stormy, all weather's moods,
by which you cherish all that you have made." (*St Francis of Assisi*)

"We ourselves are water, air, earth and life of this environment created by God."
(*Guaviare people, Colombia*)

Creator God, we have disturbed the natural cycle, upset Earth's fragile balance.
Forgive us for our lack of care.

St Francis, joyful steward of creation, you lived in peace with nature and with God.
Inspired by your witness, may we defend our common home.

St Francis, pray for us.

Fourth prayer: Water

"We praise you, Lord, for Sister Water,
so useful, humble, precious and pure." (*St Francis of Assisi*)

"Now they even want to take our rivers, which have been ours forever."
(*Rusbel Castornoque, Kukama people, Peruvian Amazon*)

Creator God, from your gift of water flows all life,
yet we pollute your clear springs.

Forgive us, as the earth cries out.

St Francis, you drank deeply from Christ's living water.

May we, like you, live simply and prize the good things of the earth.

St Francis, pray for us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 20TH SEPTEMBER

Saturday 19th September

1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49 What is the risen body like?

Luke 8:4-15 The parable of the Sower

Sunday 20th September TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 55:6-9 'Seek the Lord...call to him.'

Philippians 1:20-24, 27 'Christ will be glorified in my body'

Matthew 20:1-16 The generous love of God

Monday 21st September ST. MATTHEW *Apostle and Evangelist*

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13 Some are called to be apostles, some evangelists

Matthew 9:9-13 Jesus calls Matthew to follow him.

Tuesday 22nd September

Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13 To act virtuously and with justice pleases God

Luke 8:19-21 Jesus describes his real family

Wednesday 23rd September St. Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) *Padre Pio was a Franciscan who bore the stigmata - the wounds of Jesus' passion - in his body.*

Proverbs 30:5-9 God is a shield of those who take refuge in him

Luke 9:1-6 Jesus sends out the Twelve

Thursday 24th September Our Lady of Walsingham *Shrine of Our Lady in Norfolk dating back to 1061. A replica of the Holy House of Nazareth drew many pilgrims up to time of Reformation. All that is left is the Slipper Chapel.*

Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 'Vanity of vanities...'

Luke 9:7-9 Herod was anxious to see Jesus

Friday 25th September

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 'There is a season for everything...'

Luke 9:18-22 'Who do you say I am?'