

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*

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 16th August

Today the Church in this country celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. While the definition of this dogma was only made in 1950, it has been part of the tradition of the Church for centuries. When Mary came to the end of her life she was taken up, body and soul, into the glory of heaven - she assumed her place close to her Son. In effect the Church's belief is that she shared fully in the Resurrection of her Son who on Easter Day rose with a glorified body. Surely God's intention is for us all to rise with his Son and enjoy the wonder of Jesus' New Life? What is unique about Our Lady is that this gift was bestowed upon her immediately as her life on earth ended so that no decay touched her body which truly had been a Temple of God and Tabernacle of the Most High. Our Catholic Faith acknowledges that Mary, from the moment of her conception, knew no trace of sin and was saved by God's grace. Thus she provided a worthy dwelling place for God's Son: at the Annunciation when Mary said 'Yes!', the Word became flesh in her womb. The teaching about the Assumption flows from this.

Our Lady has a special place in God's plan and God chose her, prepared her and prompted her. Nevertheless she is also one of us, a human being, and so she shows us what it means to be a disciple of her Son - listening, contemplating and responding to the Holy Spirit. We must never forget that we too have been chosen by God and there is a mysterious plan unfolding in our lives. Our destiny is to live forever with God in the glory of heaven following in the footsteps of Our Lady who is the first Christian. For us, it is not always easy to comprehend space and time from God's perspective. We speak in terms of bodily death and then waiting for bodily resurrection at the end of time. I often wonder what this in-between period will be like! Can you imagine that final moment when all will be revealed?!

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There are two traditional places marking where the Assumption took place. One is in Jerusalem close to the Upper Room of the Last Supper. The church building is called the Basilica of the Dormition. The word implies Mary falling asleep at the end of her life and immediately sharing in the Risen Life of Jesus Christ. The Basilica is only 120 years old though there are older ruins to be found there. There is an amazing acoustic and singing hymns around a stone effigy of the sleeping Virgin puts you in touch with the song of the Angels and Saints before the Throne of God. How many of us have gathered around loved ones as they came to the end of their lives? Imagine what it was like for the Apostles!

The other traditional site is at Selcuk just outside ancient Ephesus (in modern Turkey). A German mystic called Catherine Emmerich (who died in 1824) had visions of the 'House of the Virgin Mary'. These were written down and it was only in 1881 that the site was discovered. There is a small house with ancient frescoes so close to Ephesus where John the Beloved Disciple went. Perhaps Our Lady lived here? The House nestles in hills surrounded by pine trees. There is a gentle breeze despite the heat and one could almost be there with Our Lady in the contemplation of what God had done for her and the journey she had made of total response. I have had the privilege of celebrating Mass and being there for the Assumption. Christians and Muslims gather on this Holy Day. There is a Service with food being blessed and taken home. What a sense of community of two major World Faiths - Our Lady the link! In the afternoon, Catholics celebrate the Eucharist. If times improve allowing for safer travel, this place is well worth a visit.

I invite you today to think about your response to God's calling. When has it been demanding? What joys have you felt? Have you always got it right? What will heaven be like? Let each of us ask Our Lady to be our companion and to prompt us to a total giving especially in this time of pandemic and uncertainty. Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. Stay well. Enjoy the summer. Be open to God's blessings! 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. 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 Mass has been celebrated for Denis O'Brien 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.

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.

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 *NB No Mass 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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 16TH AUGUST

Saturday 15th August

Ezekiel 18:1-10, 13, 30-32 'Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!'

Matthew 19:13-15 People bring their children to Jesus for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer

Sunday 16th August ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Apocalypse 11:19, 12:1-6, 10 The sign of the woman adorned with the sun

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 All people will be brought to life in Christ

Luke 1:39-56 Mary visits Elizabeth. Her Magnificat praises God for the marvels he has done in her life.

Monday 17th August

Ezekiel 24:15-24 'You will learn that I am the Lord!'

Matthew 19:16-22 'What must I do?'

Tuesday 18th August

Ezekiel 28:1-10 Words spoken against the arrogant King of Tyre

Matthew 19:23-30 'Everything is possible for God'

Wednesday 19th August

Ezekiel 34:1-11 The shepherds who do not care for their sheep

Matthew 20:1-16 Parable of the hired workers

Thursday 20th August St. Bernard (1090 - 1153) *Founder of the Cistercian Order. A person of holiness and wisdom*

Ezekiel 36:23-28 I shall pour clean water and you will be cleansed

Matthew 22:1-14 Parable of the Wedding Feast

Friday 21st August St. Pius X (1835 - 1914) *Became Pope in 1903*

Ezekiel 37:1-14 the vision of the dried bones coming to life

Matthew 22:34-40 'Love God and love your neighbour as yourself'