

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*

26th Sunday of the Year 27th September 2020

In St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 1:20, he says '...with Christ Jesus, it was always Yes...' I was thinking about these words when reflecting on today's Gospel parable from St. Matthew. Jesus speaks about a son invited to work in the vineyard by his father whose response is 'No' but then realises what he should do and goes to work, as opposed to a second son who responds immediately with 'Yes' but does other things. St. Matthew has the scenario of Jesus surrounded at table by 'public sinners' whose previous ways of living might have been scandalous and yet, discovering the Gospel message in the person of Jesus, listen and change their lives. The Lord was aware of the complaints of the 'religious and faithful' who only show contempt towards those welcomed by Jesus. The Lord is full of compassion and wants all people to put into practice the wonder and beauty of the Kingdom and not - as in last week's parable - begrudge God's mercy shown to others.

Jesus must have also reflected on the fact that he said 'Yes' to his Father and meant it. This was not a 'mechanical' affirmative. He faced opposition, he was rejected, he suffered grievously. His sharing life with us on earth was a blessing for humanity and his readiness to die the gift of forgiveness and salvation. The Resurrection is the Father's 'Yes' to his Son's total obedience resulting in eternal life in the glory of heaven - not only for Christ, but for the whole of humanity. Today's Second Reading from St. Paul to the Philippians is an echo of this as we hear of the Son emptying himself of glory, being born as one of us, accepting death on a Cross and then being raised in glory. What a wonderful hymn of praise! St. Paul recounts this action of Christ in order to inspire his own community in Philippi with actions that bring them together in common love, tenderness and sympathy. The unity of the Christian family resonates with a great sign of Christ's obedience. This imagery is wonderful and challenging!

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In society at the moment with the spread of the coronavirus and new regulations, we are being asked to say 'Yes' and mean it! I'm sure that many of you must be like me, finding it hard to keep up with everything! From week to week there are adaptations which require an almost immediate response. You have to think about the reality of your situation and find ways of putting into practice what is asked. You are aware of the implications of what is demanded and wonder where are we heading. There is so much uncertainty. Many of you might be facing redundancy or a reduction in work. Those with businesses must be worrying about the present and the future. Young people at university are wondering about being quarantined; the same applies to schools. Those frontline staff who have given so much of themselves during the pandemic must fear going down the same road as in the bleak months earlier in the year with so much death, illness and sadness. Perhaps you just do not have enough money to put food on the table or pay the bills? Will there be total lockdown? Our prayer IS important. Uniting ourselves in the action of Christ who is so close to us in the crises we face, will give us hope and courage and will be a beacon for so many others. Never underestimate the power of your example, especially perseverance.

On a more personal note, this Thursday 1st October I will start my 13th year in Welwyn Garden City. I never expected I would face what has happened in these last six months. Nothing prepares you for it! I am so grateful to all who work so hard to support the life of our community, keeping the faith alive and offering outreach to those in need. Many in voluntary ways give up a huge amount of time to ensure that things run smoothly and maintain the beauty of our churches and their grounds. I am aware of the countless people whose loving example and prayer provide a foundation and spring board for all that happens. THANK YOU!

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. Please remember us as we do our best to serve you. 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 Violet Calvert RIP, Phil Lancaster RIP, Ian Crux Intentions, Sarah Day RIP Anniv, Cissie Bargh RIP Birthday, Carmine Monis RIP, Tracey Laycock RIP, Philip Waller RIP.

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

WELCOME to Eva Dobner baptised at Our Lady's on Saturday 26th 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 (from last year's group) 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 15 people present.

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

RCIA Congratulations and welcome to the adults and children who completed their initiation into the Catholic Church on Saturday 26th. More celebrations on 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.

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.

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS With the Secondary School transfer process unfolding, many parents will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity'. Please download the form on the parish website called 'Request for a Certificate of Catholicity'. Fill it in and return to Fr. Norbert who will then contact each family to arrange for a Certificate to be issued.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL His Feast Day is 27th September, superseded this year by Sunday. Let us pray for our local SVP and for all those they serve in our area.

FR. JOE BOWARD RIP Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Joe, who lived for a number of years at St. Bonaventure's. Saturday 26th September is 9 years since he died.

CAFOD FAST DAY will be on Friday 9th October. CAFOD has taken the theme of 'survive build heal' for this year. There is the obvious awareness that the coronavirus is affecting peoples everywhere. CAFOD asks us to support our brothers and sisters in developing countries by helping set up handwashing stations, providing PPE for health workers, providing children with pencils and books as they study at home, helping farmers safely sell their produce and delivering food packages to those who cannot go out to work. We will not be having retiring collections in WGC but encourage you to use online **cafod.org.uk/give** or text **CAFOD** to **70085** to donate £10. Thank you.

CAFOD PRAYER *O God, you call us out of darkness.*

May we hear your voice in the cry of our brothers and sisters in crisis.

As you walk alongside us always,

may we walk beside one another listening and responding in love.

Shine the light of your compassion through us,

dispelling chaos, fear and despair.

Breathe hope and courage into all our hearts

as we work together to rebuild once more.

Strengthen us, Lord, and keep us steadfast.

Bring healing and comfort to us all

and lead us renewed into your marvellous light.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AUTUMN COURSE Who is Jesus? How do we grow in relationship with him? What is the key to deeper conversion to Jesus in our day-to-day lives? '**Metanoia**' is a ten-part series which leads on a journey with Jesus into deeper conversion. Filmed on location in the Holy Land, 'Metanoia' includes preaching from Fr Dave Pivonka TOR and personal testimonies from men and women whose stories will inspire you to seek to encounter Jesus and the new life he is constantly inviting us to. Please join us on this journey! The parishes of Welwyn Garden City will be running 'Metanoia' as an online course (via Zoom) this autumn. It will be on **Thursday evenings at 8.00pm, starting on 8th October**. As well as the film presentations exploring our personal conversion to Jesus, there will be an opportunity to discuss each week's theme in small groups. **Please email Fr Tony on tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk** if you'd like to take part, or if you'd like further information.

Testimonies from parishioners who completed 'The Wild Goose', a course about the Holy Spirit by the same team who produced 'Metanoia':

"The Wild Goose course was an interesting, thought provoking and quietly challenging course which really help us as a couple to refocus our spiritual life and build an awareness of the Holy Spirit and how it can be such a powerful advocate in our day to day lives"

“I think a few of us reunited with the Holy Spirit and the joy and resolve it brings in our everyday life”

“I have grown spiritually stronger and more dependent on the Holy Spirit since completing the course”

“I feel emboldened to ask others to trust the Holy Spirit to guide them, as he guides me, and to step out in faith”

BBC 3 COUNTIES RADIO Fr. Norbert was on at 8.55 and not 7.30am as put in the newsletter. Apologies to those who waited a long time. It appears that the ‘live’ interview may be at 6.30am on Sunday 27th with Edward Adoo. Perhaps ‘catch-up’ might be better !!

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY *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). ***For those who have downloaded the Government Covid-19 App, please use the QR Code which has been created (one for each church).*** 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. 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 reminded by our Bishops that people should not gather outside church in a social way before or after Mass as this may be a source of further contagion.

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. 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.

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!

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>

Two new prayers are on the next page:

Fifth prayer: Fire

"We praise you, Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night.
He is beautiful, playful, robust, and strong." (St Francis of Assisi)
"The gift we have received is a fire,
a burning love for God
and for our brothers and sisters." (Pope Francis, homily, 6 October 2019)
Creator God,
your flames blaze yet leave us whole.
But our fires destroy at reckless speed;
great forests fall beneath our feet.
Forgive us for our part in this.
St Francis, you loved wild places,
the trees and all their birds within.
May we protect each blade of grass,
be mindful of each breath of air.
St Francis, pray for us.

Sixth prayer: Earth

"We praise you, Lord, for Sister Earth,
who sustains us with her fruits,
coloured flowers, and herbs." (St Francis of Assisi)

"There will be a point when we will not have this richness. And then what will we do?"
(Yésica Patiachi Tayori, Harakbut indigenous people, Peru)

Creator God,
we grieve for our Amazon sisters and brothers
whose lands are wrecked by greed.
We take more from the earth than we need. Forgive us.

St Francis, joyful steward of creation,
from you we learn to live with less,
to give and not to take.

St Francis, pray for us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 27TH SEPTEMBER

Saturday 26th September

Ecclesiastes 11:9 - 12:8 The joys and worries of age

Luke 9:43-45 Jesus is going to be handed over

Sunday 27th September TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ezekiel 18:25-28 God's desire to forgive the person who repents

Philippians 2:1-11 Community and Christ

Matthew 21:28-32 Carrying out God's will - a parable

Monday 28th September

Job 1:6-22 The beginning of the story of Job

Luke 9:46-50 The example of a child revealing true greatness

Tuesday 29th September ST. MICHAEL, ST GABRIEL AND ST. RAPHAEL *Archangels*

Daniel 7:9-10,13-14 Thousands wait upon the One of Great Age

or Apocalypse 12:7-12 The victory of Michael and his angels

John 1:47-51 '...above the Son of Man angels, ascending and descending.'

Wednesday 30th September St. Jerome (340 - 420) *Priest and Doctor of the Church. Lived for a time in a cave in Bethlehem close to the place of the Nativity and translated the Bible into Latin.*

Job 9:1-13,14-16 Job responds to his friends who suggest that his suffering is due to his own wrong-doing

Luke 9:57-62 The cost of discipleship

Thursday 1st October St. Therese of the Child Jesus (1873 - 1897) *Carmelite Nun and Doctor of the Church. Born in Lisieux in France, she wrote 'The Story of a Soul'. Her Little Way was to do small ordinary things in life in an extraordinary way.*

Job 19:21-27 'Pity me, pity me...'

Luke 10:1-12 The 72 are sent out in pairs by Jesus

Friday 2nd October The Holy Guardian Angels

Job 38:1, 12-21, 40:3-5 Conversation between God and Job

Matthew 18:1-5, 10 '...their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

O Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.