

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*

Nativity of the Lord 25th December and Sundays up until 19th January

Cardinal Vincent Nichols asks us this Christmas Season to reflect on the Crib. He focuses on Angels, St. Joseph and obviously the Christ Child. And he wishes us all a very happy Christmas! Angels declare the Good News of the birth of Christ, promising peace and goodwill. Angels ask us to listen to the unexpected, directing us to a scene of weakness and poverty as the chosen place of God. For us, listening carefully and hearing the full message is often difficult. We so readily jump to quick conclusions that are not the best because they are based on only part of the story. Only slowly do we learn that, in our search for peace and goodwill, we often begin from the wrong place. The angels teach us where to look!

In St. Joseph's heart, as so often in ours, things must have been very far from clear. Only because his heart was also faithful and true to God, did he manage to remain steady in the steps he took. For most of us it is not so. We all have to admit our mistakes. Perhaps over Christmas in our families there will be mis-steps, harsh words, and unwanted squabbles. In such moments we must learn from our mistakes. Then we can grow closer to the Lord who is full of mercy and compassion for us in our weakness. In a world where things are often very far from clear, St Joseph reminds us that faithfulness and honest stewardship are the essential elements of being a disciple, not success or praise. At the centre of every crib scene is the baby Jesus, who would grow up to profess himself to be 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life'. Here is Truth, defenceless in the manger! Can we learn that today Truth has always to be respected, nurtured, protected? Selling truth short is one of the ways in which we fail in our love and respect for God. In the Crib we see Jesus Christ, reaching out to all of humanity, urging us to speak the truth always. He will do so, even when it takes him to the Cross. We too, then, are called to live and express truth, in all its complexity, as best we can, even when it takes us where we might rather not go. We encounter the living Word of God in so many ways but especially in the Sacred Scriptures. In every parish in England in Wales, we have embarked on a 'Year of the Word'. This is an opportunity for us to discover afresh the riches of the Word of God in the Scriptures. On 26th January the whole Church will mark, for the first time, the 'Sunday of the Word of God' that has recently been established by Pope Francis. In our own Diocese, in Westminster Cathedral at the end of January, there will be a Scripture Roadshow, including 'tents of meeting' and specially commissioned artwork throughout the Cathedral, encouraging us to receive the Word of God more attentively. Pay a visit if you can.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND THANKS Fr. Norbert and Fr. Tony are very grateful for the many people who have worked so hard to help us get our churches ready for the celebration of Christmas through church cleaning, preparing flowers, Christmas trees, Cribs and service sheets. Advent has included huge generosity in gifts for the shoebox appeal, presents for needy children, gift bags for those less fortunate as well as the hampers for the housebound. We are aware of groups and individuals who take great care of those who are isolated at home or serve by bringing them to church. So much preparation and support reaching out to others! Then at Christmas there has been a wealth of talent in the music and singing at the Masses and Services, in the ministries of the Altar Servers, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and Welcomers. The 'behind-the-scenes' teams are crucial in the smooth running of everything in our three parishes as well as those on various committees. The priests would like to thank you for your Christmas cards, gifts and offerings; words of appreciation and acts of kindness make a real difference at this busy time. May this Christmas be a time of grace and blessing for us as individuals, for our homes, for our community and for the world which God loves so much. 2020 will be a momentous year for Welwyn Garden City as we celebrate its Centenary. May this New Year bring you all hope and courage in everything that you face.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY St. Stephen is the patron saint of altar servers and so we invite our servers to come and serve at Holy Family Church at 10am Mass. Please bring albs and cinctures. There will be refreshments afterwards. Of course, everyone is welcome.

HOLY FAMILY The feast of the Holy Family will this year be celebrated on Sunday 29th December with Mass at 9.30am. Happy Feast!

NEW YEAR'S DAY The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, is always celebrated on 1st January. Mass will be at Our Lady's at 10am. Happy Feast! It is a wonderful way of starting off the year in the company of parishioners and the Lord.

EPIPHANY As 6th January falls on a Monday, the Solemnity will be transferred to Sunday 5th January.

MARY ROBERTSON RIP Mary's Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady's on Monday 30th December at 12.30pm.

LAURENCE MASSEY RIP Laurence's Funeral Service will be at Holy Family Church on Thursday 9th January at 1pm. **JOHN TYSON RIP** Funeral details will be announced when known.

RCIA for those preparing to join the Catholic Church at Easter starts up again on Monday 20th January at 7.30pm in Our Lady's Sacristy.

CONFIRMATION The young people's next session will be on Sunday 26th January at 7.15pm at Holy Family.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION The first meeting for parents of First Communion children from our three churches will be on Wednesday 29th January at 7.30pm in Our Lady's Church. Children from Holy Family Parish have their first session in the Parish Room of Holy Family on Wednesday 15th January at 4.30pm. Children from Our Lady's Parish have their first session in the church on Sunday 2nd February at 10am.

MARRIAGE Any couples who wish to get married in Welwyn Garden City or elsewhere should contact Fr. Norbert. The Marriage Preparation Day will be on Saturday 28th March. Couples marrying in 2020 or 2021 are invited.

SCHOOL MASSES To mark a new school term, Our Lady School will have Mass on Tuesday 14th January at 2.15pm and Holy Family School on Wednesday 15th at 2.15pm.

SUPPLY Bishop Paul McAleenan will celebrate 8am and 10.30 Masses at St. Bonaventure's on Sunday 12th January. We are most grateful to him for his help and to Fr. Frank Leonard and Monsignor Harry Turner who give such great support to us in our parishes.

ST. BONAVENTURE'S CHILDREN'S TUESDAY GROUP We meet again on Tuesday 14th January 3.45pm - 4.45pm in the hall at St. Bonaventure's. Why not come along?

BIBLE STUDY IN 2020 Fr Tony writes: 'Please note that, due to a really positive response to our 'Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible' study, we are now at full capacity and are unable to offer any more places. Many thanks to all those who have registered for this course'.

FIRST FRIDAY The next early morning Mass at 6.30 at St. Bonaventure's will be on 3rd January followed by breakfast in the hall. There will be a festive flavour!

MONTHLY ADORATION The next 'Restoration' Holy Hour will be on Friday 10th January at 7.30pm. The Holy Hour includes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, worship music, reflections and silence. All are welcome. *Please note that in 2020 Friday 10th April will be Good Friday and Friday 8th May will be a Public Holiday; so on those Fridays there will not be the scheduled 'Restoration Holy Hours'.*

CENTENARY SERVICE The Churches in Welwyn Garden City will be having a Service to mark the town's Centenary on Sunday 19th January at 4pm. It will be at St. John's Church, Monks Rise AL8 7NX. Afterwards there will be tea and cake. The WGC Brass Band will play. The Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire and Bishop Paul McAleenan will be there. Other dignitaries have been invited and representatives of local schools. Fr. Norbert will be giving the reflection and he needs your support! So please keep this date in your diaries and do all you can to come and give thanks to God for 100 years of the Garden City.

PRIEST'S REFERENCES *Extra Date!* Parents seeking a Certificate of Catholic Practice for their child's entry to Reception Class or Nursery are invited to sign up for an appointment with Fr. Norbert in Our Lady's Church on Friday 10th January 4.00 - 6.00pm. Please ring Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579 or email parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk to book a 5-minute appointment. Parents are asked to fill out a yellow 'Extra Form' available at the back of the churches, to bring their child and wait in the church to be called. Thank you.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL will next meet on Wednesday 15th January in Our Lady's Sacristy at 7.30pm. If you would like any matters raised, please let Fr. Norbert know.

FINANCE COMMITTEES St. Bonaventure's will meet on Tuesday 14th January at 10.15am, Our Lady's on Friday 17th January at 7.45pm, Holy Family's on Wednesday 5th February at 5pm. The new Chair of St. Bonaventure's Finance Committee is Gordon Groves. We are very grateful to Bill Hayes for all he has done as Chair over a number of years; he continues as the Parish Book-keeper. Our Lady's Chair is Rob Brand and Holy Family's Chair is John McAndrew.

BUILDING WORKS The new Parish Centre is progressing and should be ready June/July depending on the severity of the winter. There has been a delay at Holy Family with the Tower but we have been assured that things will get moving soon.

ASSISI 2020 Brochures and booking forms are now available at the back of our churches. The pilgrimage will have Christians from WGC to mark the Centenary and will be from Sunday 24th May until Friday 29th May 2020. There will be limited places so if you are interested, please return your booking form to Pax Travel as soon as possible. If anyone needs an electronic version, please let Fr. Norbert know.

CAFOD NEWS The CAFOD group will be meeting at 2pm on Tuesday 7th Jan in the parish room at Holy Family. All are welcome.

SUPPORTERS NIGHT The CAFOD group will be hosting a "Thank You" night for our supporters on Friday 24th January in the parish room at Holy Family from 7pm. We will be providing a light supper and some liquid refreshment to thank the parishioners of WGC for their unfailing and much appreciated support throughout the year.

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES are currently in need of good quality children bikes for children between 7-9 (boys and girls). If would like to donate we would be most grateful. contact Monika on 07769290349. Thank you.

THANK YOU to all those who came and cleaned our churches in preparation for Christmas. It was great to see many new faces! The next clean at St. Bonaventure's will be on 9th January.

Website for our 3 parishes www.wgc-catholics.org.uk

26 Thursday	10am	Mass	Holy Family	St. Stephen
27 Friday	10am	Mass	Holy Family	St. John
28 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	The Holy Innocents
29 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's	The Holy Family
29 Sunday	8am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	
	10.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	11.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	
	<i>No evening Mass at Holy Family</i>			
30 Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	6th day in Octave of Christmas
	12.30pm	Funeral Mass		
31 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	7th day in Octave of Christmas
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
01 Wednesday	10am	Mass	Our Lady's	Mary, Mother of God
02 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	St. Basil
03 Friday	6.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Christmas feria
	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
04 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Christmas feria
04 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's	Epiphany of the Lord
05 Sunday	8am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	
	10.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	11.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	
	6pm	Mass	Holy Family	
06 Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	Christmas feria
07 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Christmas feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
08 Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	Christmas feria
09 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	Christmas feria
	1pm	Funeral Mass Holy Family		
10 Friday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Christmas feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
11 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Christmas feria
11 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's	Baptism of the Lord
12 Sunday	8am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	
	10.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	11.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	
	6pm	Mass	Holy Family	
13 Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	feria
14 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
15 Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	feria
16 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	feria
17 Friday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	St. Anthony, Abbott
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
18 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	feria