

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*

24th Sunday of the Year 13th September 2020

In last Sunday's Gospel, Jesus taught us about the importance of being reconciled with one another. In this week's Gospel – continuing on a similar theme – he speaks about the importance of being able to forgive one another.

If we are to forgive others, we must first be able to receive the forgiveness of God. How beautiful the gift of God's forgiveness! But what do we mean when we say God's forgiveness is a 'gift'? When we receive a present, we would typically say we haven't 'earned' it. Gift-giving originates from another's charity, and not our merits, and comes in many forms, such as money, time, or even a skill.

Giving is only one side of the equation; the other side of giving is receiving. For a gift to be useful, the recipient must first accept it, and then it must be opened. Gifts need to be utilized in full to reap maximum benefits! In the case of forgiveness, God freely and abundantly offers it to us, but if we do not accept nor if we do not open our hearts to it, the blessings available remain untapped. Sadly, we miss out on the whole intended purpose of healing and drawing us closer to Him, as well as strengthening us for the challenges of this life. The Good News of the Gospel is the proclamation that God has forgiven us, freely and without reservation.

God has offered us forgiveness, but we still need to accept this incredible gift. As we learn in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, because God is merciful and has forgiven our debt of sin, we must, in turn, be forgiving toward others. Only through God's grace can we forgive one another and do so from the heart. Forgiveness, because it requires dying to our pride, our desire to be right, our thirst for revenge — is impossible apart from God's grace.

Most people have faced situations where they struggle to let go of bitterness, anger, or resentment. Feeling if they forgive this person, then there are no consequences; that they would be letting this person 'off the hook.' We have to entrust these situations and people to God, praying that they be blessed and shown mercy. This can be a powerful example of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant reminds us how imperfect we are, how indebted to God for His outpouring of forgiveness each person truly is. Recognizing the breadth of all God has forgiven us, the true extent of His love and mercy showered upon us — how could we possibly refuse to forgive someone else? This week, let's ask God for the ability to forgive others from our hearts.

Fr Norbert and I continue to pray for you. Every blessing for the week ahead. *Fr Tony.*

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 Neville Davis's intentions (birthday), Chris Doocey RIP (anniv) and Monica Campbell Macknight RIP.

LATELY DEAD Please pray for the repose of the souls of Andrzej Jurek and Monica Campbell Macknight who have died recently.

CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa Cafferkey and Roger Lake who married at St. Bonaventure's on Saturday 5th September.

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 will not be 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!

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 We hope to celebrate the Confirmations of our youngsters later this autumn. We will contact candidates once we have more information.

FIRST COMMUNIONS We are delighted that we will be able to celebrate our First Communion Masses next month. Families have been contacted with the relevant information this week.

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 A number of adults and children were due to be baptised at the Easter Vigil and become full members of the Church. Thankfully, these celebrations will now take place in early October. All of the candidates have been contacted.

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.

WALSINGHAM This Saturday 12th September 2020, Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate Mass at 3pm in honour of Our Lady of Walsingham at Westminster Cathedral in place of the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Watch the livestream on the day at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk

CHRISM MASS The Holy Oils will be blessed by the Cardinal at Westminster Cathedral on Monday 14th September at 11.30am. 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. Usually the Mass has been celebrated in Holy Week with all the priests and bishops of the Diocese gathering with a multitude of people. Priests have renewed their priestly commitment. This year only the Deans of the Diocese will gather with the Cardinal. However, the Mass will be livestreamed at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk. Fr. Norbert as the Dean of Stevenage will be there and after the Mass will collect the Holy Oils and take them 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.

CAFOD online meeting Saturday 19th Sept at 10am

All are welcome to join CAFOD online next Saturday 19th Sept from 1030 to 12. During the meeting you will hear from Maria Gonzales, head of international development. Maria will update you on how your support of CAFOD is helping poor communities overseas tackle even more challenges in light of the Coronavirus Crisis. Email Tony Sheen tsheen@cafod.org.uk for details of how to register. Please continue to pray for the communities we are working alongside overseas.

SEASON OF CREATION

Last week saw the start of the Season of Creation which runs from 1 September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4 October (the 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 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> or see 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 13TH SEPTEMBER

Saturday 12th September

1 Corinthians 10:14-22 We are a single body because we all share the one bread
Luke 6:43-49 Parables of houses built on rock and soil

Sunday 13th September TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ecclesiasticus 27:33-28:9 Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you
Romans 14:7-9 Alive or dead, we belong to the Lord
Matthew 18:21-35 Continuing the theme of forgiveness

Monday 14th September THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS Feast

Numbers 21:4-9 The bronze serpent prefigures the Cross of Christ
John 3:13-17 God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved

Tuesday 15th September Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Corinthians 12:12-14,27-31 You together are Christ's body
John 19:25-27 Mary at the foot of the Cross

Wednesday 16th September Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, Martyrs *Cornelius and Cyprian were martyred for the faith in the mid-third century*

1 Corinthians 13:31-13:13 St Paul's famous teaching about love
Luke 7:31-35 We played the pipes, and you wouldn't dance

Thursday 17th September St Robert Bellarmine, Bishop and Doctor *Effective but moderate Counter-Reformation preacher*

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 I preached what the others preach, and you all believe
Luke 7:36-50 The repentant woman anoints Jesus' feet

Friday 18th September

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 The centrality of the Resurrection
Luke 8:1-3 The women who accompanied Jesus