

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2022

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I have been fortunate enough to have had some days off. My original intention of visiting Paris fell through; however, other opportunities arose. I caught up with friends scattered afar whom I hadn't seen for a while. I cooked dinner for my brother and his family serving up Sunday roast on china my parents received for their Wedding nearly 60 years ago. I even had a chance to 'lie-in' a couple of mornings - what a treat! Sometimes what we want to do and the plans we make are scuppered by circumstances. Nevertheless, with ingenuity and imagination a whole new world can open up - or the rediscovery of former times, places and people.

Inside this newsletter you will see that we are going to make a big change in regard to the way we gather and celebrate as a community, following the Bishops' Conference guidelines and in a manner appropriate for us in Welwyn Garden City. For some, there will be a huge sigh of relief as everything goes back to 'normal' and for others a fear may set in as they wonder about their own personal safety and vulnerability. It is really important that everyone is sensitive to the needs of others and that you make me aware of issues which may arise. I don't see it as a going back - rather a reaching forward to establishing a new normality. Throughout this time of pandemic with lockdown, closure and opening up, I have always wanted you to be safe in our churches and this still is my priority. I realise that other places have moved at a variety of speeds which has frustrated some who have seen a spectrum of practices elsewhere. Let's pray that as the end of February comes, we'll be able to enjoy the new 'freedoms' in a Church setting.

In the Gospel of 6th February, St. Peter's boat is used by Christ to preach to the throngs of people on the seashore. A fresh casting out of the nets results a massive haul of fish. And Peter is overwhelmed! 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man' we hear from his lips. His life is forever changed as he accepts the invitation to catch people. On 13th February, Jesus starts his 'Sermon on the Plain'. St. Luke tells us that Jesus fixes his eyes on his disciples and starts to speak, pronouncing beatitudes and woes - their lives take a different course. Finally, on 20th February, we are presented with some of Jesus' most challenging teaching as he asks his disciples to love their enemies and be as compassionate as the Father is. Perhaps some turn away, unable to face the prospect of living out this teaching? As we 'put out into deep water' with St. Luke, let us be prepared to live the Gospel in the present moment, to listen with ears of February 2022; let us respond in ways that the world and those around us need as life enters a new phase. God bless you and your endeavours. Remember you are in my prayers every day.

With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

OUR CHURCHES WITH THE NEW REGULATIONS

The Bishops' Conference has given the go-ahead for parishes to return to 'normal'. Some churches have done so already. Here in our three churches, we will do so from the weekend of 26th/27th February:

Mass books and hymn books will be in use. **Printed newsletter every week.**

Holy Water will be in the stoups as you enter church. However, we will ensure that at the end of each Mass the stoups will be emptied, wiped clean and fresh Holy Water put in for the next congregation.

Benches will not be blocked off.

Votive candles will be available to light at the stands.

Altar Servers will start up again at the end of February. They should let Fr. Norbert know as soon as possible if they plan to return to serve, that they have albs which fit and be ready to come half an hour earlier to run through serving with the priest for the first couple of weekends. Once the established servers are back in action, new servers can be enrolled.

Holy Communion to the Sick and the housebound will be possible. Again, please let Fr. Norbert know soon and the format of how it happens from Mass will be outlined.

Holy Communion Priests and Eucharistic Ministers will continue to wear masks and sanitise their hands for the distribution of Holy Communion. *It is really good practice for those receiving Holy Communion to do so **before** they leave the priest or the Eucharistic Minister.*

Chapel at Our Lady's will be open once more for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Norbert will open it at 7am and close at 6pm.

Teas and coffees on Sundays and weekdays will be possible following the pattern from before the pandemic. Good hygiene will be crucial. Those who would like to offer this hospitality should let Fr. Norbert know.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES Please consider setting up a standing order for the church you attend; this will guarantee income to support all that happens. There are forms for each parish available on the parish website; these can be used even if you are not a tax-payer. Just to be clear: YOU set up the standing order with your bank (right hand part of form) and return the left-hand side to us so that we can claim back GiftAid if tax is paid.

DONA has arrived and has been installed in each of our churches. This is a machine for contactless payments to be made to the particular parish in which the machine is sited. It is possible to GiftAid your donation. We are so grateful to you for your generosity in giving to our parishes especially in the time of pandemic.

Thank you At this time across the Diocese the Annual Financial Return has to be sent in. A huge amount of work is done by the (volunteer) book-keepers of our three parishes throughout the year but especially at this time to get the accounts in order. For this we are very grateful.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION Before half-term all families who have enrolled for First Holy Communion and for Confirmation will be emailed with details of preparation and the dates of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. *If you haven't yet sent in forms which are on parish website, please do so as soon as possible!*

ADULTS WHO WISH TO JOIN THE CHURCH (RCIA) If anyone is interested in joining the Catholic Church or is an adult who missed out on Confirmation when younger, please contact Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 and he will organise preparation directly with you. We are still aiming to celebrate the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil (Saturday 16th April)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION There will not be a face-to-face preparation day this year. However, any couples wanting to marry this year or next either in WGC or elsewhere should contact Fr. Norbert to organise the paperwork and the Marriage Course. Thank you. Valentine's Day is round the corner!!

BAPTISMS Please contact Fr. Norbert or Fr. William if you wish to arrange the Baptism of your child and they will organise all that is needed.

SYNODAL PATHWAYS All the responses which came in over the last few months have been sent to the Diocese. Fr. Norbert is grateful for these. In due course when we are in our new hall, there will be a continuation of some of the themes raised and a moving forward together.

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/> Gospel reflections, the latest news, 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.

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. New Zion is very grateful for the financial support being received.

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. William are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let them know. Donations for the Masses should be put in an envelope and given to Fr. Norbert or Fr. William or popped through the letterbox of one of the parishes. The intentions celebrated will be published in the newsletter as below.

This week Masses have been celebrated for: John Manfagan RIP, Peter Peck RIP, Bridie O'Mahony RIP, Phil Spranklen RIP Anniv, Kay Diamond's intentions, Jacqui O'Connor RIP, Sophie Constable (Baptism Anniversary), John O'Flynn RIP, Sarah Kellett (ill), Eileen Ling RIP Funeral, Stephen Moger's Intention, Anthony Walsh RIP, Romualdo Gurjao's Intention, Agnelo D'Souza (sick), Mary and Paddy O'Driscoll RIP Anniv, Josie Bell RIP & Louise Fearn's RIP.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE On the parish website wg-catholics.org.uk there is a form to download requesting a Certificate of Catholic Practice. Please fill it out and return to Fr. Norbert at Our Lady's and he will prepare the document and return to the family. Thank you. If you need a Baptismal Certificate for your child, please contact Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral takes place at 12 noon every Friday. It is back in the Lady Chapel and all are welcome. *Fr. Norbert will be the celebrant on 11th February. The Mass will be offered for Teresa Fernandes, Fr. Norbert's Mum, on the 10th Anniversary of her death.*

TRANSPORT TO MASS If any parishioners need a lift to Mass the Transport to Mass Group is there! If anyone can offer a lift, please contact Kay Mason on 01707 335633. All necessary safeguarding and health and safety guidelines will be followed. In particular there is a need for volunteers for 10.30am Mass at St. Bonaventure's. Your help would be much appreciated.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK on Friday 11th February.

The Pope has chosen as a theme, "*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" Pope Francis writes, '*Mercy is God's name par excellence; mercy, understood not as an occasional sentimental feeling but as an ever-present and active force*'. Pope Francis's message contains rich and profound thoughts which will benefit everyone. He describes how bodily affliction affects our spirit, '*hearts become heavy, fear spreads, uncertainties multiply*'; he addresses healthcare workers directly, '*your service alongside the sick, carried out with love and competence, transcends the bounds of your profession and becomes a mission*'. To view the full text of the message please click here: [The Holy Father's Message for World Day of the Sick 2022.pdf](#)

OPUS DEI EVENING OF RECOLLECTION at Holy Family Church for Lent on Wednesday 23rd March at 7pm: An Evening of Recollection is like a mini retreat lasting only a couple of hours, spent away from your ordinary occupation, when you can reflect on how you live your faith in your everyday work and with your family, friends and colleagues. An atmosphere of personal prayer and recollection is maintained during the evening to help you consider aspects of your life and identify areas in which you can improve. Two meditations will be given by a priest, along with a talk on some aspect of the spiritual life, an examination of conscience and Benediction at the end of the evening. A priest will also be available for confession throughout the evening. This recollection is intended for men, however, there is also an Evening of Recollection for women at St. Peter's Church, Hatfield on 16th March at 7pm. All are welcome and no booking is necessary. If you have any questions please contact Fr. William or Ed Newman-Sanders (07984149320).

LENT COURSE We are planning a Lent group this year which will involve the study of Scripture or some aspect of the Catholic faith. It is envisaged that this will take place in the Parish Room at Holy Family Church on Thursdays at 7.30pm. The first session will take place on Thursday 3rd March. Please contact Fr William for further details.

SAFEGUARDING Fr. Norbert will be meeting with the Safeguarding Representatives of our three churches this week. They work as a team to serve our parishes. If anyone has anything they would like to be raised, please let Fr. Norbert know by Tuesday evening.

NEW HALL Next weekend Fr. Norbert will be meeting with the Chairs of our Finance Committees to discuss the opening of the new Hall, how it will be managed and the paying off of the loan. There are many groups, organisations and individuals who are desperate to make bookings and have waited patiently. Hopefully we'll soon be able to give more news.

EARLY MORNING MASS The plan is to have 6.30am Mass at St. Bonaventure's on the First Fridays in Lent, namely 4th March and 1st April. If anyone is happy to help with the breakfast which follows, please let Fr. Norbert know. Perhaps we'll be able to re-establish long-term this First Friday Mass which was so popular before the pandemic.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK OF 6TH FEBRUARY

Saturday 5th February St. Agatha Virgin Martyr from early Church
1 Kings 3:4-13 God asks Solomon what he would like to be given
Mark 6:30-34 Jesus sees that the apostles need to rest. The people need teaching from the Lord!

Sunday 6th February FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 6:1-2,3-8 'Whom shall I send?' 'Here I am, send me.'

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Paul's testimony

Luke 5:1-11 The calling of the disciples

Monday 7th February

1 Kings 8:1-7,9-13 The great festival as the Ark of the Covenant is brought into the Temple.

Mark 6:53-56 People desperate to touch Jesus for healing

Tuesday 8th February St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947) Sudanese woman who experienced the cruelty of slavery. She was rescued, forgave those who had wronged her and became a Canossian Sister.

1 Kings 8:22-23,27-30 The prayers of the king and of the whole people in the holy place.

Mark 7:1-13 Traditions and customs - Jesus' comments.

Wednesday 9th February

1 Kings 10:1-10 Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

Mark 7:14-23 Jesus helps his disciples to understand the significance of his teaching

Thursday 10th February St. Scholastica (480-547) Twin sister of St. Benedict.

A woman of deep prayer.

1 Kings 11:4-13 Solon's infidelity to God

Mark 7:24-30 The faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman

Friday 11th February Our Lady of Lourdes St. Bernadette's vision of Our Lady in 1858 leads to it becoming a place of pilgrimage. Today is the World Day of Prayer for the Sick.

1 Kings 11:29-32,12:19 A sign for the people of Israel and the House of David

Mark 7:31-37 'Ephphatha! Be opened!'

MASS TIMES FOR THE WEEK

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|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Saturday | 6pm | Our Lady |
| Sunday | 8am | St. Bonaventure |
| | 9.30am | Holy Family |
| | 10.30am | St. Bonaventure |
| | 11.30am | Our Lady |
| | 6pm | Holy Family |
| | | |
| Monday | 9.30am | Our Lady |
| Tuesday | 9.30am | St. Bonaventure |
| | 7pm | Our Lady |
| Wednesday | 9.30am | Holy Family |
| Thursday | 9.30am | Holy Family |
| Friday | 9.30am | St. Bonaventure |
| | 7pm | Our Lady |
| 08 Saturday | 10am | St. Bonaventure |

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| CONFESSIONS | St. Bonaventure's | Saturday 10.30am - 11am |
| | Holy Family | Thursday 10am - 10.30am |
| | Our Lady's | Saturday 5pm - 5.30pm |