

# 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*

## ***Second Sunday of Advent 6th December 2020***

John the Baptist is here! He always makes his appearance in Advent. We hear a voice with its clear message. We see him in his exotic clothing and eating choice desert food. Most importantly, God uses this instrument to stir our hearts into action responding to the urgent call to repentance. Indeed John's first words which we hear in St. Mark's Gospel are 'Someone is following me...' It's very easy to focus attention on the strange, unusual personality; however, John is so keen to carry out his purpose of preparing the way for the Lord. The power of John's insight lies in the fact that the Coming One will baptise with the Holy Spirit. What do you personally make of John? Does he figure in your reflection? Do you consign him to history leaving him as someone from the past?

Repentance implies admitting I haven't always got it right. It is the introduction of a new pointer offering fresh direction. The Greek 'metanoia' is a change of heart and a reorientation of perspective. Repentance opens us up to forgiveness which is a gift experienced from God which then must be used to give someone else the same quality of encounter. 'Reconciliation' is a word we now use often in the Church and for me it implies healing and peace as relationships are mended with God, with others and with oneself in the core of one's being. This year as we continue our Advent journey, it will not be as easy to seal this dynamic of repentance - forgiveness - reconciliation sacramentally as we might have done in the past. It is not as straightforward getting to Confession; the COVID-19 requirements are strict and so many things weigh upon us making us anxious and fearful. Nevertheless God has not abandoned us. God reaches out with a hand of loving kindness; God ceaselessly is finding ways of breaking into our lives with mercy and compassion. Have you found this? Think about this week. Has someone reached out to you when you least expected it?

*next page*

Did another person make you feel good when you were feeling low and kindle joy within you? Was patience shown you or did you hear a forgiving word? Have you found yourself being a source of gracious healing in a setting you least thought likely? God is at work. God works in mysterious ways. God uses these moments to break into the lives of others through us. In better times when opportunities come for Sacramental Confession, that will be the moment to express in word what your heart tells you has happened and hear concretely the Prayer of Absolution; in the present, never stop acknowledging that you are in need of his healing grace and be open to it as God chooses to share it with you.

Finally, our world desperately needs more John the Baptists! Individuals, couples, families, households and communities ready to stand up and be counted, determined to point to Christ's presence with all that he brings. As with John, it will be easy to be misinterpreted with resultant scorn and suffering. God wants us in small and massive ways to make a difference in this Season of Advent so that no one misses out on hearing Good News and being transformed by the message. Perhaps this could be a challenge you ponder this week in the midst of our post-lockdown world (in Tier 2!)?

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. We value your faith and your prayers, your determination and dedication. God bless you and all your loved ones.

With much love, ***Fr. Norbert***

**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 Please note that at present we cannot use the heating in our churches during Mass because they have strong blowers and would transmit any airborne virus. We apologise for this. Best to wrap up well as it has got colder. *The procedures and structure of Mass are now in a link on the website. Please have a look if you have not yet read them.*

**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

**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. *Masks will need to be worn and distancing respected as far as possible.*

### **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, 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. 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: Michael Diver RIP, Eithne McShane RIP Anniv, Jacqueline Leonard RIP, Kathleen Evans Int, Sarah Finucane Birthday Int, Johnny D'Souza RIP 1st Anniv, Remedios Villas Malaban RIP, Ena Richardson RIP 1st Anniv, Mike Harrop RIP, Norman Brannan RIP, Patrick Finn ints, Roger Groom RIP

**LATELY DEAD** Please pray for the repose of the souls of Edna Bichard, Olive Barry (Kelly Donkor's grandmother), Remedios Villas Malaban (Myra Mendoza's mother) and Margaret Keenan (Sheila Linga-Thevar's mother) who died recently.

**ADVENT PRAYER** There will be two half hours of Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament which will be on the YouTube Channel by the end of the week. This will give us time to reflect on the healing, forgiving grace Christ offers through his coming. Snatch a moment to be still and reflect in readiness for Christmas.

**SVP THANKS** The SVP wants to thank the kind parishioners who gave clothes and toys to a single mother and those who helped a victim of domestic abuse to set up a new home with a number of items including a tv , a washing machine and a microwave.

## SACRAMENTS

We return back to the norms as they were before the second lockdown.

**Baptism** is permitted with only **6** present, including the child.

**Weddings** are possible with **15** present.

**Funerals** can take place with **30** mourners maximum.

**Confirmation.** We will contact the young people and their families to suggest new dates in 2021.

*Preparation for Sacraments in 2021 will be published in the New Year. Don't worry. You and/or your children will not miss out!*

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES** 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](mailto:foodbank@newzioncf.net) and you will be given details as to how to make a donation.

**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. *Next one Sunday 6th December.*

**PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS** Parents who will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity' for Reception class or Nursery should download the form on this 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.

**CALENDARS** Luke will be selling Calendars again this year using photos from within the three churches. All profits going to CAFOD. Due to lockdown they will be sold online from his website [www.lukesphotography.co.uk/shop](http://www.lukesphotography.co.uk/shop) [1] and will be delivered to your home.

Please call 07710 097122 if you would like a calendar but do not have online access.

## **CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FOR ELDERLY AND HOUSEBOUND**

We are planning to deliver Christmas Hampers to the elderly and housebound this year but because of the Covid restrictions etc these hampers will be slightly different than those in previous years.

Your generous response in previous years has been amazing and this continues to fund the items for the hampers. The recipients are always truly delighted to receive their hamper, but also to know that we as a parish are thinking of them at this sometimes lonely time of year and that is the best gift of all. Hamper collection for delivery will take place from the Parish Room at Holy Family Church on the afternoon of Saturday 19th December. If you are able to help with delivery, please contact Fr. Tony 01707 327434 or Sally Kee 01707 261394. The hampers will have to be collected in a very controlled way this year to keep everyone Covid safe; so if you are able to help, please make contact asap so we can devise a rota for collection.

**METANOIA Jesus conquers evil** On Thursday this week we had the eighth session in our online course, 'Metanoia'. The theme this week was Jesus' power over evil.

*Summary:* Although we do not need to be obsessed with the evil one, we need to be aware that he exists. However, Jesus confronts the evil one and has authority over him. Jesus has given us a share in his power over the evil one. Every time we resist temptation and respond to grace, we participate in Christ's saving victory over evil. This response to grace is conversion, which is God acting in us.

*Reflection:* Come, Holy Spirit. Take a moment to pray a prayer of gratitude thanking Jesus for his victory over evil and for the ways you have experienced this victory in your own life. When you are done, ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen your hope and fortitude for the struggles you may face as you draw closer to God.

**A HUGE 'THANK YOU' FROM FR. TONY** 'On Friday 27th I completed a half-marathon at Stanborough Park. It was not easy reaching that point and it has made me realise I am not as young as I used to be! The fantastic news is that through the generosity of so many parishioners, over £3100 has been raised through sponsorship (at the time of writing). This money will go to our local SVP branch, and will help them support 60+ clients locally in Welwyn Garden City. This is a tremendous effort in difficult times and I would like to thank every one of you who has contributed. God bless, Fr Tony.'

*There is still time to support him by going to JustGiving page:*  
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tony-thomas-876>

**ADVENT SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP** on BBC Radio 4 Sunday 6th December at 0810 from St. John's, Digswell, celebrating the Centenary of Welwyn Garden City. With the Rev Dr Rob Marshall, Rector of Digswell, Welwyn Garden City. Reading: Revelation 21: 22 - 22:5. *Fr. Norbert was asked to read the Scripture and a couple of prayers.*

**MISSIO RED BOXES** At present it is not possible for your Red Box to be collected or taken to church as normal. The suggestion is to count your money and :  
Send a cheque payable to Missio-Mill Hill to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU

Give on-line to [missio.org.uk/redbox](https://missio.org.uk/redbox)

Give via text. Text REDBOX 5 (to donate £5) or REDBOX 10 (to donate £10) to 70085

By phone on 020 7821 9755 (in office hours)

Bank transfer Account: Missio Sort code: 16-00-16 Account number: 10824230

Reference: RB + your postcode

*This money supports missionaries who share God's love and the communities they serve.*

**THE HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL** are seeking to appoint a new Foundation Governor. An opportunity for you to support our Catholic primary school has arisen. Governors have oversight of the curriculum and the appointment of staff and are accountable for the performance of the school. They have a strategic role to play as well as acting as a critical friend to the Head teacher. More information about the role is available on <https://education.rcdow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2.-being-a-foundation-governor-booklet.pdf>

Also, <https://holyfamilyschoolwelwyn.secure-primariesite.net/topic/governors>

If you are interested in supporting our school, please speak to Fr Norbert, our Chair of Governors for more details and contact Jackie Willcocks in the school office 01707375518. Thank you.

**'GIVING TREE 2020'** This year, more than ever, there are a number of families in real need in our parish. Due to the pandemic we can't hold our usual 'Giving Tree' mass at Holy Family Church, where we usually collect Christmas gifts for such families. This year it has been suggested we provide vouchers for supermarkets, which is a Covid-friendly solution, and allows families to buy food, toys or clothes - depending on what is most needed. We would like to support around 60 families with a £10 voucher if possible, through charities including 'HomeStart' and 'For Baby's Sake'. For further information please contact [suzanne.meenan@btinternet.com](mailto:suzanne.meenan@btinternet.com). **£700 has already been contributed.** Thank you so much. If you feel you can help, please put your donation in a sealed envelope labelled 'Giving Tree' and put it through the door of the Presbytery at Our Lady's by the evening of Sunday 6th December. Cheques should be made payable to 'Our Lady's, Welwyn Garden City'.

**HOLY FAMILY CHURCH** Sadly the copper drain-pipes and part of the side porch roof of Holy Family Church were cut away and stolen last week. This is covered by the insurance. However, what a pity that this should have happened!

**ST ALBANS** The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral has resumed. It takes place at 12 noon. Admission to the Cathedral Mass does not require ticketing and there is social distancing in a very big space in the nave. All welcome.

**CAFOD** *Tony Sheen from CAFOD Westminster has written:* Heartfelt thanks for all that you and your parish have done to support CAFOD during this difficult year. I am writing with a short CAFOD update and information about our Advent resources for parishes.

Although the needs are huge the generosity of the Catholic community in England and Wales has enabled CAFOD to continue our work this year. Together we have supported some of the world's poorest communities most impacted by the virus, reaching people in more than 33 countries. These include Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Brazil where communities were already facing tough challenges. Over six million people received health advice, and more than half a million people received hygiene supplies and services to prevent and reduce infection. Many more poor and vulnerable families have been supported with food supplies when they had no way to earn a living during lockdown.

To pass our thanks on to your parishioners. Kayode Akintola, who works for CAFOD in Sierra Leone, West Africa, recorded a message of thanks for all of our supporters, for sharing via social media, websites and newsletters.

CAFOD's Advent parish resources and prayers include Advent prayer cards (one for each week), a series of daily Advent reflections, online prayer events, an online carol service guide with a carol sheet, a chance to join or organise a fun run and other social events. For more information on all of these please see [cafod.org.uk/parishes](http://cafod.org.uk/parishes)

## **CHRISTMAS MASSES**

We have been thinking long and hard about Mass at Christmas in our churches, especially given the numbers usually attending and the restrictions of the pandemic. Unfortunately, because of its size, it is not possible to have large gatherings in St. Bonaventure's. The Children's Masses and the Carols before the 'Midnight' Masses cannot happen in the usual way. We will do our best, given the tight regulations, to ensure that Christmas in church will be a holy and happy experience where we all will feel God's Love-in-Jesus so intimately close.

### **Masses on Christmas Eve**

**OUR LADY'S** 3pm, 5pm and 9pm.

**HOLY FAMILY** 4pm, 6.30pm and 10pm

### **Masses on Christmas Day**

**HOLY FAMILY** 8am and 10am

**OUR LADY'S** 9am and 11am

There will not be a booking system. It is imperative that you give yourself time to arrive early and give details to the stewards. When the church is full to capacity, you may have to stand outside.

*Please would stewards let us know their availability at Christmas. Thank you.*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING 6TH DECEMBER

### **Saturday 5th December**

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26 All that God will do for his people  
Matthew 9:35 - 10:1,5,6-8 Jesus feels sorry for the people

### **Sunday 6th December SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 'The Lord is coming with power!'  
2 Peter 3:8-14 'The Day of the Lord will come...'  
Mark 1:1-8 John the Baptist prepares people for the coming of Christ

### **Monday 7th December St. Ambrose (340 - 397) *Became Bishop of Milan on this day in 374. Converted St. Augustine. Doctor of the Church***

Isaiah 35:1-10 'Look, your God is coming...to save you.'  
Luke 5:17-26 The healing of the paralytic and the forgiveness of sins.

### **Tuesday 8th December IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY**

Genesis 3:9-15, 20 The first Eve  
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 God's choice  
Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation: God asks Mary to be Mother of his Son

### **Wednesday 9th December**

Isaiah 40:25-31 The Lord gives strength to the wearied.  
Matthew 11:28-30 'Come to me, and I will give you rest'

### **Thursday 10th December**

Isaiah 41:13-20 'Do not be afraid, I will help you'  
Matthew 11:11-15 'If anyone has ears to hear, listen'

### **Friday 11th December**

Isaiah 48:17-19 'I, the Lord your God, teach you...lead you..'Matthew 11:16-19  
Jesus - the friend of sinners