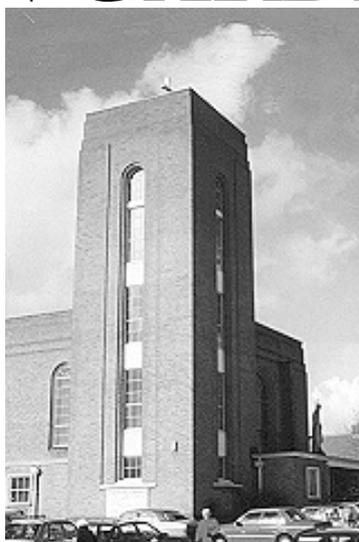


WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. Tony Thomas

Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time 31st January

Today's Gospel reading from St. Mark presents us with a picture of Jesus as someone who makes a deep impression on people because he teaches with authority. His words and his actions together make a huge impact. The onlookers regard this as something 'new'. Quite different to what they had been used to! It can be very easy to take our faith in Jesus for granted. We know about him. We have read or heard the passages from the Gospels. We say prayers together in his name. Today's passage is a real call to stop in our tracks and ponder the question 'What is new?' or 'Do I really know him?'

In these days of pandemic, we have to keep distance from one another, wearing masks as and when required or appropriate. Do you recognise those you bump into on the street? Can you make out their features? Does a smile shine from their eyes? Is their voice as distinct as in the past? With the present lockdown, has their hair grown so long or bushy for you not to realise who they are?! We are challenged to try and tune in even more into discovering the other person and to work out how they are and what weighs down upon them. Perhaps a conversation through a mask and socially distanced gives you an opportunity to get to know them better?

With Jesus Christ, he is not present to us as he was when he walked here on earth. We cannot look into his eyes or hear a voice resonating in our ears. There is not a hand holding ours or an arm firmly around us. And yet, he IS with us. From the Father's Right Hand, he finds ways of reaching out to us. When another person looks into your eyes, feel a glance from the Lord. When birds are singing to their hearts content, hear the joy of Jesus singing out to you in the Spirit. As the wind blows gently or powerfully, allow his arms to embrace you with love. At present many of you are staying at home, shielding or protecting loved ones. You tell me that you watch Mass all over the world through the internet and that you feel connected. While, on the one hand, you are not

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able to receive Holy Communion *physically*, on the other hand, the spiritual communion and the sense of community never leave. We are all having to find fresh ways of being Church, of interacting with others and of demonstrating and experiencing love. Humanity has great ingenuity. God is so far ahead of us! So, it is allowing God to come in ways previously never considered; it is letting God use us to touch someone else's life with his grace.

The coronavirus and its various mutations are testing our resilience and patience. We just have to hang on in there. Remember you are NOT alone. We have each other. We have Jesus Christ. Let the deep impression he leaves on us in new ways, revitalise us for the journey ahead. Have a good week and God bless you.

With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Places of Worship can remain open. We continue with our schedule of Masses:

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

The new strain of coronavirus is a worry and we still want to ensure the safety of all coming to church and of our stewards. Here are some extra changes we have made in our churches:

1. Creating greater distance between people in the pews.
2. Having more protection for the stewards by their being behind a table as people arrive and as they leave.
3. The distribution of Holy Communion will be more measured, with distancing between the 'bubbles' that come up.
4. It is even more important for people arriving at the doors of the church to keep extra space between them and those in front and those behind.
5. Socialising outside the church before or after Mass should NOT happen for everyone's well-being and safety.
6. Church heaters will switch off 5 minutes before Mass begins and more ventilation will be absolutely necessary.

CONFESSION Only by appointment - Fr. Tony on 01707 327434 or Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234. All necessary precautions have to be undertaken in terms of distancing and the safety of priest and penitent.

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.

OUR LADY'S CHAPEL looks out onto the car park of the new Parish Hall which means that people can come to the windows and look into the Chapel and see the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady's statue. Not ideal in the cold, but a possible place to offer a (quick) prayer.

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: Janice Ready RIP, Brian Hall RIP Birthday, Kevin Lee RIP, Storm Minnette RIP Anniv, Brendan Corr RIP Anniv, Patrick McEvoy Snr RIP, Jeanette Budd RIP, Maureen, John, and Tony McEvoy RIP, Chloe's Intentions, Carmen Araujo RIP, Moacir Americo RIP, Kemp Family Intentions.

ASH WEDNESDAY marking the start of Lent will this year be on 17th February. There will be 9.30am Mass at Holy Family and 7pm Mass at Our Lady's. The Bishops' Conference has advised that ashes can only be given by being sprinkled on the head (and not in the usual way as a Sign of the Cross on the forehead). Consequently, here in Welwyn Garden City the ashes will be given to those who wish to receive them (by one of the priests) after Holy Communion has been distributed by the other priest as people leave the church. There will be a streamed Mass on the YouTube channel available from 7am. Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence

VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNING Do you miss catching up with fellow parishioners after Mass? During this lockdown there's a Virtual Coffee Morning on Thursdays at 10.30am. Simply make yourself a coffee, sign on to Zoom and catch up with some familiar faces or make new friends. Please email Fr Tony (tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk) for the Zoom meeting details. We hope to see you there!

LENTEN COURSE: NO GREATER LOVE Filmed on location in the Holy Land, No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best-selling author Edward Sri guides you through the last hours of Christ's life. You will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's immeasurable and unconditional love for you—grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before. (Here is a trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kQlQ1_Z6Qk&feature=emb_logo).

The course will run for five Thursdays, beginning on 25th February, at 7.45pm on Zoom. Please email Fr Tony (tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk) to book your place. All welcome!

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. We are NOT going to have the Planned Giving Boxes of Envelopes for the coming year. Please consider changing to standing order as a way of giving.

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.

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 Signed Mass on 7th February.

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.

LAPTOP AND TABLET COMPUTERS FOR HOME LEARNING

As we all know, there is a currently big demand for computers that children and young people can use for home learning while schools are closed. The Welwyn Garden City SVP is therefore appealing to parishioners for donations of second-hand laptop and tablet computers which they can pass on to our schools, Our Lady's and Holy Family. Please contact Mary Dunne at marydunne22@yahoo.com if you have a laptop or tablet to donate. Please note that schools, in conjunction with the local authority, have systems to 'cleanse' these devices of all data before they are ready to be used by children.

The specifications should be as follows:

Chromebooks: any specification will be fine

iPads: anything iPad Air 2 or newer

Windows laptops: at least Windows 10, at least Core i3 + processor, at least 4GB ram +, any hard drive size

Many thanks.

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

CARITAS VOLUNTEER FAIR "Step Forward in Love"

Online Event Wednesday 10th February from 11am -1pm

Whether you want to try volunteering for the first time or are looking for a new role, come and find out what volunteering opportunities are out there at the moment.

Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/caritas-volunteer-fair-tickets-135713539851>

CAFOD Daily Walk? Something positive this Lent.

Could you walk 10000 Steps either on one day or everyday this Lent? The walk could be a sign of your solidarity with all those who do not have access to a safe water source and who have to walk for water each day. Find out more or sign up online at cafod.org.uk/walk and go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty. Thank you for your ongoing support,

One minute film also available here: [Walk for Water video: Walk for Water: Abdella's journey | CAFOD - YouTube](#)

PARISH DIARIES 2021 We have received copies of the Parish Diary for our parishes. If you would like a copy (they are free) please email your name and address to parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk and a copy will be posted/delivered to you.

SACRAMENTS

Current regulations (as of 15th January 2021)

Baptism is NOT permitted outside of communal worship.

Weddings are possible (in limited circumstances) with 6 present. If you are planning to get married this year or next in WGC or beyond, please let Fr. Norbert know so that the necessary preparation and paperwork can be organised.

Funerals can take place with 30 mourners maximum.

Confirmation 2020 Sadly we have had to postpone these celebrations.

SACRAMENTS 2021

On the Parish Website, you will find forms to download:

First Holy Communion (and Confession) - Children should be at least in Year 3

Confirmation - Young people should be at least in Year 9

Adults for the Sacraments

Adults who wish to join the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion or Adults already baptised in a Christian Church who wish to be received into the Catholic Church or Catholic Adults who missed out on Confirmation when younger.

Our plan is to use the Season of Lent to do the preparation and celebrate the Sacraments soon after Easter. (Dates haven't yet been decided) It is not ideal but this past year has had so many ups and downs with dates due to lockdown and worries about the coronavirus. We do not want to put extra pressure on families or individuals at a time of much uncertainty. We want adults and children to share in the life of the Church through the Sacraments.

Most of the preparation will be done at home with families/individuals and there will be Zoom plenary sessions to keep everyone in touch. We will do all we can to keep people safe and not be at risk whilst encouraging formation for the Sacraments.

At this stage we need to know names and details so we can be in touch. Please return the forms to Fr. Norbert as soon as possible. Email addresses are really important.
Thank you for your co-operation. Let's do our best!

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
31ST JANUARY**

30th January

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 The faith of Abraham and Sarah

Mark 4:35-41 The calming of the storm at sea

Sunday 31st January FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 God will raise up prophet like Moses

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 Paul speaks about relationships

Mark 1:21-28 Jesus teaches with authority and makes a deep impression on the people.

Monday 1st February

Hebrews 11:32-40 Heroes of faith

Mark 5:1-20 Jesus heals a man who is possessed

Tuesday 2nd February PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Malachi 3:1-4 The Lord will enter his Temple

Luke 2:22-40 Mary and Joseph take the child Jesus to the Temple

Wednesday 3rd February SS. Laurence (died 619), Dunstan (died 988) and Theodore (602-690) Archbishops of Canterbury

Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15 Always want peace with people.

Mark 6:1-6 Jesus is rejected in his home town

Thursday 4th February

Hebrews 12:18-19 'What you have come to...'

Mark 6:7-13 The sending out of the Twelve

Friday 5th February St. Agatha *Virgin Martyr from 3rd Century*

Hebrews 13:1-8 'Imitate the faith of those who preached the Word of God to you'

Mark 6:14-29 The martyrdom of John the Baptist