



St Bonaventure
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Our Lady Queen of Apostles
141 Woodhall Lane AL7 3TP
01707 323234

Holy Family
194 Knightsfield AL8 7RQ
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WELWYN GARDEN CITY PARISH

3rd December 2023 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Parish Priest Canon Norbert Fernandes 01707 323234 norbertfernandes@rcdow.org.uk

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Parish Administrator Mrs Jacqui Boon (Tuesday - Friday 9am until 12 noon)

Parish Email: wgc@rcdow.org.uk

Website wgc-catholics.org.uk

TRINITY HALL Bookings + enquiries can be made through www.wgc-catholics.org.uk which has terms and conditions of hire, as well as a live diary. General enquiries please call 01707 537464

So we have left St. Matthew and now embark on all that the Lord offers us in this ‘Year of St. Mark’. This Gospel is the shortest of the three and so there will be times when the Church shares passages from St. John’s Gospel as well. St. Mark is the Patron Saint of Venice and everywhere in this city, there are images of lions to be found. Why? Because the lion is a symbol of St. Mark. The Gospel was probably set in writing for a community of Christians in Rome who had left all behind and were entering a time of testing and challenge. Many were condemned to death and it was the lions who fed upon them. What courage and resilience, what strength and love! St. Mark reveals Jesus to his readers as the Suffering Servant and has a long tract in which the disciples are three times told about the Lord’s impending suffering and death, connected with ‘Resurrection’! Three times they fail to grasp the teaching; their understanding *must* grow!

Perhaps you are telling yourself ‘I haven’t got time to waste idly speculating on lions or other Scriptural images’. However, it is crucial that we picture our Lord and Saviour as the One who suffered and died, who rose from the dead *and will return in glory at the end of time*. He wants to save each one of us. Just as he first came to the manger in Bethlehem as a baby truly human, so his Majesty will be witnessed by countless people at the end of the ages. Advent prepares us to enter the wonder of eternal life!

I pray that God’s grace may open us up to the joy of this holy season, may prompt us to help people we know who are in need and may remove the barriers which get in the way. God bless you!

With much love, **Fr. Norbert**

CHAPTER MASS Fr. Norbert is presiding at Westminster Cathedral this Tuesday (5th) - Vespers at 5pm and Mass at 5.30pm. He's just found out! *All welcome!*

RCIA Next session Monday 11th December 7.30pm in Our Lady's Sacristy.

BAPTISMS Please contact Fr. Norbert or Fr. Marco to arrange the Baptism of your child.

MARRIAGE Couples planning on getting married in WGC or elsewhere 2024/2025 should contact Fr. Norbert. Marriage Preparation Day on **Saturday 10th February 2024.**

FOOD BANK New Zion Christian Fellowship continues its Food Bank every Wednesday 9 - 11am. New Zion is happy to receive contributions from 8am on a Wednesday at 140 Cole Green Lane AL7 3JE. Email foodbank@newzioncf.net to make a donation. There are Food Bank Baskets at the back of our churches. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS Workshop on Mon. 4th 11am and 2pm and Sat. 9th 11.30am at St. Bonaventure's. £25 per wreath, proceeds to HCPT. Text Rachel 07793 651834

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES For an update, go to <http://www.hwsf.org.uk/>

SIGNED MASS The next celebration will be the 11.30 Mass at Our Lady's on Sunday 17th December. Sarah Metcalfe from the Deaf Service will come to be with us. If anyone would like recordings of the signs for the hymns, give Fr. Norbert your mobile number and he will send them to you. (There won't be a formal practice.)

WGC CHRISTIAN CHURCHES On Saturday 9th Dec. 2-4pm, we will be singing Christmas carols in The Howard Centre in WGC with other Christian Churches. So, come and sing along and raise funds for the local Food Bank.

SCHOOLS CAROL SERVICES Sherrards Wood School in Our Lady's Church on Monday 4th at 6.30pm. Commonswood Primary School in Our Lady's on Monday 11th at 6pm. Our Lady Primary School on Wednesday 13th at 5pm in Our Lady's Church. Holy Family Primary School in Holy Family Church on Monday 18th at 5.30pm.

CAROLS IN THE CLOISTERS Friday 15th Dec. 7 - 9pm. Friends, families & children are warmly invited to sing carols in The Cloisters (bring a torch), followed by light refreshments and more carols at the Focolare Centre AL8 6JG. Bring food & drink too!

CHURCH CLEANING at St. Bonaventure's on Tuesday 5th after 9.30 Mass. Come and lend a hand if you are free. Our thanks to all who helped last weekend at Our Lady's with church cleaning and putting up the outdoor crib. The Christmas trees have arrived in our churches. Again, thank to all who helped with decorating them and to the generous donors.

CAFOD GROUP will meet Tuesday 5th at 2pm in Holy Family's Parish Room. On Sunday 10th Dec there will be a Christmas stall sale after 9.30am Mass with Christmas fayre on sale. The Christmas raffle will be drawn on 17th December.

CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S MASS 24th December 5pm at Our Lady's. Practice on Saturday 23rd at 11am in Our Lady's. All our children most welcome to take part. Parents are asked to come with their children to the rehearsal. Thank you.

ADVENT This great Season affords us the chance to take time and reflect on *who* is coming to be with us, *what* he is offering and *how* we can and should respond. This year with Christmas Eve being the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Season will fly by! In the three churches there will be **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** for half an hour after 9.30am Mass on Mondays in Our Lady's (except 4th), Thursdays in Holy Family (except 21st) and Fridays in St. Bonaventure's. **Parish Reconciliation Service** (Confessions) will be on Tuesday 19th December at 8pm in Our Lady's. There will be visiting priests and the possibility of Confession in Italian, Spanish or French and in English. *Christmas Services Card will be ready next weekend.*

CHRISTMAS Once again we have decided to provide supermarket vouchers for local families in need at Christmas time (in lieu of the Giving Tree). The vouchers are given to people who are struggling to buy food and while they can get some produce from food banks, they use the vouchers you provide for fresh meat, fruit and veg. In addition, last year two spare vouchers went towards buying new school shoes for a little boy. The families live in the Welwyn and Hatfield area and the vouchers are distributed by the local Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) organisation. If you feel you can help, please put your donation in a sealed envelope labelled 'Giving Tree' and return to the Presbytery at either Holy Family or Our Lady's by Tuesday 12th December. For further information please contact suzanne.meenan@btinternet.com Thank you.

LISTER HOSPITAL Non-urgent referrals to Chaplaincy Team 01438 285519, Urgent referrals 01438 314333 (and ask for duty chaplain), email spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net

TRANSPORT TO MASS If any parishioners need a lift to Mass, the Transport to Mass Group is there! Drivers are urgently needed. Health & Safety training and Safeguarding requirements will be arranged. Contact Anne Maclean-Eltham on 07811926002 or macleaneltham@btinternet.com

CONFIRMATION First session today (Sunday 3rd) in the Trinity Hall 3.30 - 5pm.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION The first parents and children's workshop next Sunday (10th) at 3.30pm in Our Lady's Church.

OUR LADY SCHOOL at 9.30am Mass on Monday 4th to mark the start of Advent.

SHIMMY DANCE On Wednesday 20th Dec. there will be a Christmas Social Dance in the Trinity Hall from 7.15pm to 8.45pm; this will be a fun and relaxed social evening of Ballroom & Latin music with a chance to learn a few steps, watch a fantastic demonstration by a National Championship finalist couple and enjoy yourself on the dance floor - all for just £15 per person. Wednesday 10th Jan. sees the start of a new Strictly Beginners Ballroom & Latin Course, open to all adults - even get those with two left feet! The course runs for 8 weeks & costs £90 pp. info@shimmydance.co.uk or call 07824 581381. *Happy Dancing!*

ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN SCHOOL in Stevenage. Students invite Senior Citizens and older adults to a Christmas Celebration on Friday 15th December 10.00 - 11.30am. Cakes, music, entertainment! RSVP Mrs Berwick 01438 314643 or email BerwickA@jhn.herts.sch.uk

MASS INTENTIONS *These can be booked through Fr. Norbert*

2nd Saturday

6pm Our Lady Eithne McShane RIP Anniv

3rd Sunday *FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT*

8am St. Bonaventure Lin Thomas (intention)
9.30am Holy Family Alexandra D'Costa (intention)
10.30am St. Bonaventure Roy D'Cunha RIP
11.30am Our Lady Kathleen Crowley RIP
6pm Holy Family Jesus Muniz Castelo RIP

4th Monday

9.30am Our Lady Alexandra D'Costa (intention)

5th Tuesday

9.30am St. Bonaventure Alexandra D'Costa (intention)
7pm Our Lady For the souls of all the people who have died in Gaza

6th Wednesday

9.30am Holy Family

7th Thursday *St. Ambrose*

9.30am Holy Family

8th Friday *IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY* *This is NOT a Holy Day of Obligation in this country, though a great day to honour Our Lady.*

9.30am St. Bonaventure Paul Corrigan RIP
7pm Our Lady For Catholics who live in households where they cannot receive the Eucharist, or live out their faith or who suffer for their faith.

9th Saturday

10am St. Bonaventure Sr. Catherine Ryan RIP
6pm Our Lady Brian Davidson RIP

CONFESSIONS (Sacrament of Reconciliation)

Saturdays 5pm - 5.30pm Our Lady
Thursdays 10am - 10.30am Holy Family
Saturdays 10.30am - 11am St. Bonaventure

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT 10am - 10.30am Holy Family

CHAPEL *Near Trinity Hall open Monday to Friday 7.30am until 6pm.*

ST. ALBANS Catholic Mass celebrated in the Lady Chapel of St. Albans Cathedral at 12 noon every Friday. *Everyone welcome!*

STREAMED MASS on [youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches) Saturday's 6pm Mass will be recorded and streamed on Sunday at 10am.