

# 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*

***Third Sunday of Advent 13th December 2020***

**‘Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!’**

This is the chorus of a hymn traditionally sung at Advent and suitable for today the Third Sunday when the Church cries out ‘Gaudete! Rejoice!’ because we are over the half-way mark of the Season of Advent. Purple gives way to rose vestments and the Third Candle on the Wreath echoes the same mood. Is this how you feel? Has excitement taken you over? Have you sunk to your knees with the burden of worry? Does a ‘normal’ Christmas seem but a distant dream from the past? Rejoice? Working backwards (!) with these questions, let us reflect on our answers.

‘Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel’ For the people of Israel, they had waited centuries for God to keep his promise to send them a Messiah. They were aware that Bethlehem had a role to play because it was David’s and that the Coming One would be of his lineage. They knew that the Anointed One of God would inaugurate a Kingdom which would never end. The Chosen One would be a Suffering Servant. His name is Emmanuel - *God-with-us* - that is stranger! How did they grasp that? The God of all, in all and through all WITH US; this is mind-blowing and wonderful too. Surely this message of history and the knowledge that it has come about is a fact to revel in? He has chosen to dwell in YOU. **Rejoice!**

This Christmas 2020 has meant for most of us a stripping away of many of our traditions - in the family, with friends and in the Church. That is not necessarily a total disaster. Perhaps this year with so much not possible we might concentrate more deeply and a far more focussed way on *what we can do*. Many have already put up decorations

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indoors and outside, evidenced by all the lights! Not being able to see many loved ones face to face means we have to use other modes of communication - no bad thing once in a while. The worry of much entertaining and hospitality has been lifted this time. So, spend quality moments with those who are there and remind them of how special they are to you and to God. If you are having to spend Christmas on your own, find an image of the Christ Child and hear him speaking to you because he is at your side. **Rejoice!**

These months of 2020 with lockdown-release, lockdown-release, regulations imposed, lifted, interpreted and reinterpreted must have weighed heavily on you and millions of others. Jobs are at risk; the danger of catching the Covid-19 is a constant danger. And now Brexit looms with all that brought us this time last year. The One who is Emmanuel invites us: 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest.' He does indeed carry the weight of our sufferings and he understands to the extent that he shouldered the heavy weight of the Cross. The Babe born in a manger grows into a man who is strong enough to lift us from the desperation of being at rock bottom to the glorious heights of angelic song. **Rejoice!**

Often people say to me that Christmas is for children. The young write their letters asking for gifts. They try to stay up at night looking out for the bearer of these gifts. Their excitement is almost tangible. See the smiling faces, radiating sheer delight is a wonderful moment of Christmas. I realise that the yearning for particular things might not be met for many reasons and perhaps grandparents will not be able to see the children of their offspring. Nevertheless, maybe we might take stock and kindle happiness in simpler treats? Just to see each other - in person or on a screen, through the handwriting in a card or the beam of a face in a photograph - these can and should bring happiness. **Rejoice!**

So, how do you feel? Only YOU know the answer to the question and perhaps you do not want to let on to others if you are finding times more difficult. God understands and is with you every step of the way. The incredible fact of the Incarnation with the account of Christ's Birth is that everything did *not* unfold perfectly. And yet that did not stop God rejoicing that he could be with us. He asks us to be patient and let his grace elicit the joy he offers us in Jesus, the Saviour of the World. **Rejoice!**

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. Stay well. Keep safe and come to the Christmas Feast rejoicing! God bless you.  
With much love, **Fr. Norbert**

**FR. TONY** has come into contact with someone who has contracted the coronavirus which means he has to be in isolation for the required period. He is fine and has had a shopping delivery. We look forward to his return!

**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.

**OUR LADY'S CHAPEL** One or two people have asked whether the Chapel of the Presbytery at Our Lady's might open for private prayer. Given all the regulations, it would be hard to monitor and sanitise it throughout the day. However, the 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. The Sanctuary Lamp lights up the Tabernacle. This is possible 24 hours a day as the curtains are not drawn shut. Not ideal in the cold, but a possible place to offer a (quick) prayer.

### **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: Edna Bichard RIP, Angela Pickstock RIP Anniv, Anne Dunne RIP, Alec Noonan Int, Margaret Keenan RIP, Henry Elson RIP, Nora O'Loughlin RIP, Cecilia Hernandez RIP, Edna Bichard RIP, Raymond Walsh RIP, Anthony Gill RIP.

**LATELY DEAD** Please pray for the repose of the souls of Edna Bichard, Regina Ullmann (Anja Ullmann's mother) and Barbara Wilson (Richard Wilson's mother) who died recently.

**ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONS** Please save your used stamps to support the Missions. You may put them through Mavis Cleasby's door 66 Parkway or hang on to them until life becomes more normal. Thank you.

## 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. There is an **Advent Service** which some of you may be interested in. It's on our YouTube Channel. There will be a **Signed Mass for Christmas** which will be on WGC YouTube Channel going out at 8pm Christmas Eve.

**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.

**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.

**CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FOR ELDERLY AND HOUSEBOUND** Hamper collection for delivery will take place from the Parish Room at Holy Family Church on 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.

**REQUEST FOR HELP FROM SVP** The SVP is supporting a young mum in Welwyn Garden City who is setting up home for the first time. In addition to larger items the SVP are helping her to source, she needs crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, bedding, and towels. Please email Fr Tony ([tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk)) if you are able to donate any of these items. Thank you, as ever, for your generosity.

**CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL NATIVITY** This year we will be recording a 'virtual' Nativity Play to be streamed on Christmas Eve. If you would like your children to take part, please contact either Sarah Cafferty on [david.cafferty@ntlworld.com](mailto:david.cafferty@ntlworld.com) or Eddy Gallucci on [eddyandreka@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:eddyandreka@hotmail.co.uk). The actual recording of the nativity play will take place in the week prior to Christmas. All youngsters welcome to take part! Safeguarding guidelines will be followed at all times.

**METANOIA** On Thursday we had the penultimate session in our online course, 'Metanoia'. The session was entitled 'This teaching is hard'.

*Summary:* In the scriptures, Jesus teaches and says some things that can be hard for us to accept. We can sometimes run the risk of making Jesus into our own image, emphasizing the things we like and ignoring the things that challenge us. But Jesus is not a caricature. He is a person. It is important that we be obedient and humble when we come face to face with some of these "hard teachings." Ultimately, we can be confident in knowing that God loves us, that Jesus came to save us, and that we will be given the grace necessary to embrace these hard but beautiful truths.

*Scripture (Mt 7:13-14):* Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

*Reflection:* Come, Holy Spirit. If there are any hard teachings that are causing you confusion or anxiety, ask Jesus to come and move in your heart. Ask him for conversion and conviction, but above all, ask that you can know his deep love for you. Trust that he will always provide the necessary grace for you.

**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’** Suzanne Meenan writes: ‘I am delighted to inform you that the total raised for the Giving Tree collection this year was £800! Thank you all so much for your donations, which went to HomeStart, For Baby’s Sake and Danes Educational Trust. All the charities were incredibly grateful and blown away by your generosity - the Danes Educational Trust sent this message, “It means so much to all of us and so much to our families.” Thanks also to Father Norbert for supporting with administration of the funds. Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas’

**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)

**ADVENT PRAYER** There are two half-hours of Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament which are on the YouTube Channel, giving time to reflect on Healing and on Forgiveness. Snatch a parcel of time to be still and reflect in readiness for Christmas.

**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.

## **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**

OUR LADY'S 9am and 11am

HOLY FAMILY 8am and 10am

*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.*

**STREAMED CHRISTMAS MASSES** On our YouTube Channel there will be a 'Night Mass' going out at 6pm on Christmas Eve and a 'Day Mass' available from 10am Christmas Day (with different Scriptures and Prayers).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING 13TH DECEMBER

### **Saturday 12th December**

Ecclesiasticus 48:1-4, 9-12 Elijah

Matthew 17:10-13 John the Baptist the new Elijah

### **Sunday 13th December THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 'The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me.'

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 'God has called you and he will not fail you.'

John 1:6-8, 19-28 John is a witness to speak for the light

**Monday 14th December St. John of the Cross** (1542-1591) *Spanish Carmelite Friar involved in the reform of the Order. Wrote about 'The dark night of the soul' Doctor of the Church*

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17 The Spirit of God comes upon Balaam and he declaims his poems.

Matthew 21:23-27 The authority of Jesus is questioned.

### **Tuesday 15th December**

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13 'In your midst I will leave a humble...people.'

Matthew 21:28-32 Doing - and responding - to God's will

### **Wednesday 16th December**

Isaiah 45:6-8, 18, 21-25 'Let the earth open for salvation to spring up...'

Luke 7:19-23 John the Baptist sends disciples to ask Jesus 'Are you the one to come?'

### **Thursday 17th December**

Genesis 49:2, 8-10 Jacob calls his sons and speaks to them.

Matthew 1:1-17 The genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham

### **Friday 18th December**

Jeremiah 23:5-8 'See, the days are coming...' Matthew 1:18-24 Matthew's account of how Jesus came to be born