



# The Catholic Parish of Saint Gregory the Great Northampton



PART OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON, REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 234091

OUR  
VISION

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**“A truly thriving Catholic community,  
confidently and humbly proclaiming the  
Good News of Jesus Christ.”**

# A Year of the Word

Bishop Peter launched the “Year of the Word” on 7<sup>th</sup> December; we are all encouraged to respond to this by increasing our knowledge and understanding of the Bible during this year. There are many ways in which we can do this; no one will do absolutely everything, but everyone should do something!

One thing that many people will be able to do is to come to a Diocesan Festival Day which will be on Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> at Thornton College (between Milton Keynes and Buckingham). The organisers promise:

- Inspiring speakers and worship
- Activities for Children and Young People
- RISE Theatre — a dynamic Christian theatre company
- The National Scripture Tour and Scripture tents
- A large selection of Scripture workshops
- Picnic lunch and refreshments and much more

Details or tickets and bookings will be available in January; there will be a cost to arranging this, and there will be a fund-raising event on Shrove Tuesday, (Pancake Day!) February 25<sup>th</sup>. It will be a dinner prepared by the Alpha cooking team, and it is hoped that this will cover the cost of any from this parish who wish to attend. Tickets for this will be available in the New Year. It will also enable everyone to

see how good the Alpha meals are! (The next Alpha will start on Tuesday April 21<sup>st</sup>, and run on Tuesday evenings until 7<sup>th</sup> July, with an away-evening 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June.)

Sooner than either of these, events, there are new Bible Timeline courses starting, studying the letter of St Paul to the Romans (on Monday afternoons, beginning on 13<sup>th</sup> January) and the letter of James (on Tuesday mornings, beginning on 14<sup>th</sup> January).

There is a special course lasting only four weeks in preparation for the re-dedication of England as “The Dowry of Mary”; this will be on Tuesday mornings starting on 25<sup>th</sup> February. The course is entitled “A Biblical Walk with Mary”, and fits well into the theme of the “Year of the Word”.

The three foundation courses, “Bible Timeline”, “Matthew” and “Acts” are nearly half-way through, but will run again next year, starting in September. For any who think that they are less informed about the Bible than they might be, “Bible Timeline” is an excellent place to start.

Sadly, many people do not realise the excitement and value of the Bible. It is a bit like watching football — if you understand the “off side” rule, it makes the game easier to enjoy or cricket if you understand the LBW rule!

# Catholic Newspapers

The Catholic newspapers are revising their way of distributing copies, such that parishes are required to purchase copies in multiples of five with no “sale or return” system. We very seldom sell five copies of any title, which makes it uneconomic for the parish to continue to provide this service. However, all the papers do allow for individuals to subscribe with delivery to their home address.

The Catholic Herald has a special offer on this Christmas of a free bottle of “Archangel Gin” for any who take out an annual subscription! This is not to be taken as an endorsement of the Catholic Herald or reflection on any other Catholic newspaper.

This does raise the question of how we keep informed about the news of the Church. The Vine has recently had a bit of a face-lift, and more copies are being taken, but it is only monthly. There are a number of on-line Catholic news services, among them, ICN, the Independent Catholic News ([www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com))

Sadly there are a number of “fake news” sites which claim to be “Catholic”, but are really mouthpieces of slanted or inaccurate stories which are critical of the Church or of Pope Francis.

We do, of course continue to offer “Bible Alive”, and in [particular during this “Year of the Word” encourage more people to buy it and read it as part of their daily prayer.



# Notices of Interest

**The Repository:** The Repository is selling Christmas cards & other goods in the Hall after both Masses. We still need offers of help to man (or woman) the stalls at this busy period! Please phone me on 629103, or just turn up! *Kathleen Healey*

**Advent Penitential Services:** This year these services will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm, at the Cathedral and Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm, here, at St. Gregory's.



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Adam Cristian Bulai  
who received Christian Baptism last weekend.  
Please pray for him and his family.

**Catholic Newspapers - Important Announcement:** If you regularly buy one of the Catholic newspapers, please read the notice pinned by the newspaper area.

**Bible Alive** for December & January is now available in the lobby area. It has daily readings & good articles - all for only £2.50! **Please remember to put money in the box marked 'Books & Papers' in the entrance lobby.**

**The Rehearsal for the Children's Christmas Eve Mass** will be during Children's Liturgy, 9am Mass, Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

**Encounter Youth Group Christmas Party.** Our pastoral area youth group is for young people aged 11-18 and we will be having our Christmas party Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. from 5-7pm. Please come along!

**Film at Sacred Heart.** Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan, 6pm, Sacred Heart Church parish hall, there will be a showing of a film about Sr Clare Crockett who passed away in the Ecuador earthquake in 2016. She was a budding actress who left her career & the open doors to fame behind to give her life to God.

**The Hope Centre** are looking for empty ice cream tubs and margarine tubs (NOT yoghurt pots). Please continue to donate only the large ice cream tubs and margarine tubs, as these will be used for placing dinners and puddings in for the homeless. Thank you!

**Christmas Flowers:** Envelopes are available in the Display Area for donations for Christmas flowers, which may be given in memory of a person, in thanksgiving, or as a gift! Names of those in whose memory flowers are given will be included in the newsletter for Christmas. As last year, arty crafty people are invited to do window displays - trays will be available after either Mass next Sunday.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Please remember this important spiritual powerhouse of the parish. Exposition begins after the morning liturgy of Word and Communion on Thursdays and continues until 6.45 pm. **Throughout the winter, this will be in the Sacristy, which should be more comfortable.**

**St. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** meets 1st Saturday of every month in the Sacristy, 10am. **Next meeting January 4<sup>th</sup>.** All welcome.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** meets 2nd Wednesday of every month in the Sacristy, 6pm - 7pm. **Next meeting January 8<sup>th</sup>.** All welcome.

**Society for the Protection of Unborn Children-Northampton Branch:** Next meeting will be 7pm, Friday 20th Dec. in the sacristy. Please come & hear about the work being conducted by the branch. There is absolutely no commitment required but we would love to have you there with us. If you are unable to attend then please consider saying the rosary for all unborn children and their mothers.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation Session will be on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 7pm, in the Sacristy.

**First Holy Communion — 2020** The next preparation session for children is on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January at Sacred Heart Church Hall, from 2.00 pm until 4.30 pm. . It is also essential that children attend Mass each week.

**Confirmation Preparation.** Classes begin in January 2020 & will generally be held on Saturday afternoons leading to Confirmation in July. If you have problems attending registration, please email Kathleen on kathfish@hotmail.com

**Choir Matters:** Please note there will be NO choir practice on Dec 19. The next one will be Feb 6, then Lent preparation for Easter: Mar 5, 12, 19, 26, Apr 2, followed by first Thursdays of the month: May 7, etc. New members are always welcome especially if they sing and are good at hill-walking (steps to the choir gallery are steep). *Alec*

**Becoming a Catholic:** For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175), Fr Andrew or Maria Heath.

**Tots @St Gregory's:** If you have charge of a pre-school baby or child on Tuesday mornings, come to Tots @ St Gregory's which runs in the parish hall, 9:30-11:30. We are a friendly, welcoming group where all have fun; refreshments are provided. The cost is £1 for each adult regardless of how many children you bring! We run throughout the school terms.

**Ceili Dancing:** Wednesday evenings, starts 8pm. Learn Ceili Dancing in a friendly atmosphere at St Gregory's Hall from 8pm – 9.15pm. All ages welcome! Ceád Mile Failte. For further info please phone Pat Franks on 07710624921

**Transport:** There are a number of people of reduced mobility who would appreciate a lift to Mass. In particular, anyone who comes from the Parklands area to the 11am Sunday Mass & has a spare seat in their car, please speak to Fr Andrew. Also, anyone who can offer lifts to those wanting to come to the Healing Mass on the last Friday of most months, please speak to Maureen Salter or Fr Andrew.

## Society for the Protection of Unborn Children - Youth Conference 2020

**SPUC Northampton** would like to sponsor a young person aged 18-25 to attend the 2020 SPUC Youth Conference. The conference runs from Friday 28th February to Sunday 1st March at the Willows Training Centre, Wyboston Lakes Resort, Wyboston, Bedford. This is a fantastic opportunity for a young person to be with like-minded people, sharing the pro-life message and listening to some inspirational speakers. The only stipulation is that the person chosen will have to provide their own transport to and from the conference. SPUC Northampton will cover the cost of all meals, accommodation and social activities. If you are interested or would like to have more details then please contact William Currie at wpcurrie@btinternet.com or leave your details with Father Andrew.

**Bible Timeline courses.** There will be two new Timeline courses in January at St. Gregory's Church. Mondays in the sacristy at 1pm: ROMANS & Tuesdays in the sacristy at 10am: JAMES. There will also be a course starting 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for 5 weeks on Tuesdays at 10am in the sacristy at St Gregory's: A BIBLICAL WALK WITH MARY in connection with the rededication of England as Mary's Dowry. Don't forget the Bible Timeline course at Sacred Heart continues Tuesdays, 10.15am, term time until Easter 2020. **Information on local courses can be found at: [www.bible-groups.info/timeline](http://www.bible-groups.info/timeline)**

## The last week of Advent is marked by the “Great ‘O’ Antiphons, not by commemoration of Saints

These texts, which go back to very early times in the Church reflect on different titles of Our Lord, reflecting passages from the prophesy of Isaiah. Each of the titles invites us to reflect on particular aspects of Jesus’ divinity. They are used each day as antiphons\* for the Magnificat at Evening Prayer, and the same texts are also used at Mass for the Gospel Acclamation, although not always on the same

**Tuesday** “O Wisdom” — “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” (*Isaiah 11:2*). “To those who are called, both Jews and Geeks, Christ the is power of God and the wisdom of God.” (*I Corinthians 1:24*)

**Wednesday** “O Adonai” — “With righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.” (*Isaiah 11:4*)

**Thursday** “O Root of Jesse” — “A shoot shall come from the stock of Jesse, and a branch grow out of his roots.” (*Isaiah 11:1*)

**Friday** “O Key of David” — “I will place on his shoulders the key of the house of David; he shall open and no one shall shut; he shall shut and no one shall open.” (*Isaiah 22:22*)

days. In this “Year of the Word”, these texts may help us use the Scripture to meditate each day as we come to the end of Advent on the coming of Jesus at Christmas

\* An Antiphon is a text used before and after a psalm or canticle. The response in the psalm at Mass is similar to an antiphon.

**Saturday** “O Rising Sun” — “For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will appear over you.” (*Isaiah 60:2*)

**Sunday** “O King of the Nations” — “A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests on his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (*Isaiah 9:6*)

**Monday** “O Emmanuel” — “Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel” (*Isaiah 7:14*)

## Scripture Readings 15th December 2019, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year A

To encourage and console all whose confidence in God falters, Isaiah continues his triumphal vision of the peace that will come from God, when those ransomed by the Lord will go to Zion, singing God’s praises. It was written in Babylon shortly after 540 BC, when the Persian king Cyrus had unexpectedly authorised Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem. Isaiah’s portrayal of the people’s expectant joy was later seen by Christians as a foretaste of the peace Jesus Christ will bring.

The psalm praises the goodness of God who keeps his covenant promises.

The letter attributed to James, probably the brother of the Lord, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, was written late in the first century. It is full of pastoral advice and warnings against riches and presumption. Religion is not a private matter – the Christian community is in a covenant relationship with God, and our faith in

God must be visible in love of our neighbour. We must patiently practise our faith, not swearing but letting our “yes” mean “yes”, leaving justice to God.

In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus fulfills Isaiah’s vision – he is already enabling the blind to see, the lame to walk – his kingdom is already coming into being. But this deputation from John the Baptist in prison introduces two chapters describing growing opposition to Jesus by the Jewish leaders.

Psalm Response: **Come, Lord, and save us.**

(*Isaiah 35:1-6,10; Psalm 145(146); James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11*)

*Chris Oliver*

# The Season of Creation

### Actions to Live Simply :

Communication with eye contact melts ‘Stranger fears’.

**Tip No. 23:** **Solidarity with the poor:** Put the NEEDS of others before our own (this Christmas).

**Tip No. 24:** **Live sustainably with Creation:** only boil the amount of water you will drink; reducing the power station emissions (and your bills!)

### PRAYER

God of peace and justice,  
you give us the capacity to change,  
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.

Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,  
so that the pillars of injustice crumble  
and those now crushed are set free. Amen

In order to reduce the carbon footprint of the parish through the winter the Thursday Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be in the Sacristy. This should also make it more comfortable for those praying, and (as a spin-off benefit) reduce the heating bill for the parish. The parish is also investigating the possibility of rainwater harvesting for flushing the toilets.

**Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish’s work towards the “Living Simply Award”.  
Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew**



The Gospel today speaks of those who “wear fine clothes”. These are not those for whom we search. Rather, we are sent to the poor. The psalm speaks of “bread to the hungry” and the “protecting the stranger” and we remember that we are called to “clothe the naked”. Please remember the appeal of the Hope Centre for warm clothing to help the homeless to keep warm through the winter season. Meanwhile, we pray that our newly-elected politicians may also recognise their responsibility to work with God to “raise up the bowed down”.

