



# The Catholic Parish of Saint Gregory the Great Northampton



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

OUR  
VISION

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

OUR  
VISION

# Raising the Bar

The section in the “Matthew” course on the Sermon on the Mount is entitled “The Bar is raised by the King”. In the Gospel for today we hear Jesus explaining how the old Law needs to be understood in Jesus’ ‘completion’ or fulfilment of it. This is indeed making the Law tougher!  
*(Matthew 5:17)*

There are six specific areas in which Jesus is doing this, and there is a common way in which they are expressed. They begin with either “You have learned how it was said” or “It has also been said”. Having described the Law as understood by his hearers, Jesus goes on to say: “But I say this to you . . .”, and the Greek text is very specific here, and sadly is lost in almost every translation.

The Greek word for “I say” is “λεγω” (lego), but Jesus prefixes this with the word “εγω” “ego” which is emphasizing that the teaching is his. There is a similar construction in St John’s Gospel in the seven places where Jesus describes himself as the bread of

life; the light of the world; the Gate; the Good Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; the Way, the Truth and the Life; and the True Vine. In each case the Greek for “I am” is simply “ειμι” “eimi”, but in each case Jesus prefixes it with “εγω” “ego”. Here we see a more specific underlying meaning, because every Jew knew that “εγω ειμι” (“I Am”) was the name of God Himself (*see Exodus 3:14*). It is with the authority of God Himself that Jesus is “raising the bar” of behavior from merely actions to include our intentions and desires.

We hear of four of these areas in which the bar is raised this week and the next two will come in the Gospel for next Sunday. They are: Anger, Adultery, Marriage fidelity, Truthfulness, Revenge and Loving enemies. In each of these areas Jesus is not abolishing the old Law, rather he is saying that God, who knows the hearts of all people (*see Matthew 9:4*), will judge on the basis of our intentions and desires, not just on our actions.

In the face of many of the problems in the world - violence, materialism, poverty, moral relativism - Jesus challenges us to ask “What can I do to share God’s love in the world?” Christians are called to be the light of the world, and the world will be impacted for better or for worse by the way we live our lives. When we, as Christians, fail to be saints, when we fail to live the Beatitudes and be light, the world suffers.

But when we imitate Christ’s love, mercy and generosity, the world will see our good deeds and glorify our Heavenly Father (*Matthew 5:16*). Though evil may still flourish in the face of saintly witness, we should always consider what good we can do to serve the coming of Christ’s Kingdom in this world. St John Chrysostom invites us to ponder what the world would be like if the entire Christian community lived in imitation of Christ. “Assuredly there would be no heathen, if we Christians took care to be what we ought to be, if we obeyed God’s precepts, if we bore injuries without retaliation, if when cursed we blessed, if we rendered good for evil. For no man is so savage a wild beast that he would not run forthwith to the worship of true religion, if he saw all Christians acting as I have said” (*Homily 10 in Epist. 1 ad*

*Timothy*)

*(Commentary on St Matthew by Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri)*

**Radiating Christ  
by Saint John Henry Newman**

Dear Jesus,  
help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go.  
Flood my soul with Thy spirit and life.  
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly  
that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.  
Shine through me,  
and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with  
may feel Thy presence in my soul.  
Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus!  
Stay with me,  
and then I shall begin to shine as Thou shinest,  
so to shine as to be a light to others;  
the light, O Jesus, will be all from Thee; none of it will be mine;  
it will be Thou shining on others through me.  
Let me thus praise Thee in the way Thou dost love best.



# Notices of Interest

**The Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses. We have a new set of blank cards made by the nuns of the Carmelite Convent at Quindenham which are now on display. Several people asked for blank cards. These are a bit special, as well as supporting a good cause. *Kathleen Healey*

**Valerie Hanson**, who established the Soup Kitchen in Northampton (now the Hope centre) and Valerie Hanson house for homeless young people, died peacefully at The Oakwood Nursing Home on 5th February, aged 92 years. Funeral arrangements at St. Gregory's Church will be announced later.

**Siobhan O'Donovan** would like to thank everybody for their sponsorship of The Big Sleep Out for the Hope Centre! She is still collecting sponsorship money & will be in the repository shop after 11am or give it to Dorothy in the repository shop after the 9am Mass. Thank you very much for your support.

**Bible Alive** for February & Lent 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.

**Preparing for the Rededication of England as Mary's Dowry:** There is a "do-it-yourself retreat" book available for free entitled "33 Days to Morning Glory", and everyone is invited to use this in preparation for the re-dedication of England to Our Lady at the time of the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25<sup>th</sup>). The recommended start date is Friday of this week (21<sup>st</sup> February).

**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. Anyone able to come during the afternoon would be especially welcome. **Throughout the winter, this will be in the Sacristy, which should be more comfortable.**

**Thomas Becket class of 1980** are holding a 40 year reunion at Semilong working men's club on 11<sup>th</sup> July. 7pm-late. Tickets are £6 which include a light buffet and are available from Eventbrite, Thomas Becket class of 1980: 40 years later reunion... <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/thomas-becket-class-of-1980-40-years-later-reunion-tickets-89639505173?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

**Looking forward to Lent!** There will be a course on Tuesday evenings through Lent using the talks by Bishop Robert Barron entitled "The Mystery of God". It would be particularly suitable to all who have done the Alpha course, although everyone is welcome. On Fridays through Lent there will be our usual shared Stations of the Cross with St Matthew's, starting at 7.30 pm.

**CAFOD Supporters' Event:** Come and hear from CAFOD's Director, Christine Allen, about her experience visiting our partners & giving input at global events. Be inspired by other supporters & have an energising session. Sat 22 Feb, St Augustine Church, Langcliffe Drive, Heelands, MK13 7PL 10:30-1.30pm (coffee/tea from 10am with shared lunch from 1:30pm). Please let us know you are coming on 01494863777 or [northampton@cafod.org.uk](mailto:northampton@cafod.org.uk).

**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.

**Choir Matters:** The next practice will be for Lent preparation for Easter: Mar 5, 12, 19, 26, Apr 2, followed by 1<sup>st</sup> Thurs. 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*

**Life House Quiz/Fish & Chip Supper:** A quiz with Fish & Chip supper in aid of the Life House will take place on Friday 6th March in Parish Hall. Tickets cost £10 & includes the price of the fish & chips. Own alcohol can be brought. Tickets available from Sun. 9th of Feb. after 9am Mass (Marcelle Brown) & 11am Mass (Siobhan O'Donovan) from the repository shop. Thank you for your support.

**Fundraising Dinner for the Year of the Word Festival (Wordfest):** The Bible Timeline Team are raising funds in order to pay for people from the local area to attend the Year of the Word Diocesan Scripture Festival, Sat. 6<sup>th</sup> June. **There will be a fundraising dinner Shrove Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. 7.30pm in the Parish hall. There are limited places, which are for a suggested donation of £12.50 each. Your support for this event will help others to encounter the Word of God anew in their lives! To reserve ticket contact Alex Heath on 07963032175, or Catherine Mulligan [mulligancatherine@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mulligancatherine@hotmail.co.uk) Thank you.** For more information about the WORDFEST2020 festival please see: [www.northamptondiocese.org/wordfest](http://www.northamptondiocese.org/wordfest)

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** meets 1st Saturday of every month in the Sacristy, 10am. **Next meeting March 7<sup>th</sup>.** All welcome.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** meets 2nd Wednesday of every month in the Sacristy, 6pm - 7pm. **Next meeting March 11<sup>th</sup>.** All welcome.

**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!

**Bible Timeline courses.** The course on Romans has begun, but it is not too late to join (Mondays, 1.00 to 3.00 pm). Due to the mislaying of the DVDs of the JAMES course, last week the BIBLICAL WALK WITH MARY course was begun, but again, anyone wishing to join from next week will be welcome, and will not miss out! This is in connection with the rededication of England as Mary's Dowry. During Lent there will be a course entitled "The Mystery of God", from Bishop Robert Barron. **Information on local courses can be found at: [www.bible-groups.info/timeline](http://www.bible-groups.info/timeline)**

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation Session 29<sup>th</sup> February 7pm in the sacristy Speak to Deacon Michael

**First Holy Communion — 2020** The next preparation session for children is on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March at Sacred Heart Church Hall, from 2.00 pm until 4.30 pm. . It is also essential that children attend Mass each week.

**Confirmation - 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparation Session:** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March at Sacred Heart Church hall from 3pm-6.30pm.

**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.

**Society for the Protection of Unborn Children- Next meeting** 200,000 unborn children were killed in the United Kingdom last year through abortion. Christ Our Saviour suffered agony on the cross and shed his blood for our sins. The killing of these innocent souls contributed to Christ's pain and suffering. As Christians we have a duty to fight this evil. **Please help us do this by attending the next meeting of SPUC on Friday 28th February at 7pm in the sacristy.** If you cannot attend the meeting then please consider saying the rosary imploring The Mother of God to intercede for these little ones by protecting them from harm.

# Scripture Readings 16th February 2020, 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Writing about 132 BC, Ben Sira was a learned and widely travelled Jerusalem scholar. Today's reading is one of the clearest statements in the whole Bible on free will. God created human beings and – as an essential part of our nature – gave us the ability to choose between right and wrong, life or death. God notes our actions, but “gives no one permission to sin”.

The psalm praises God's law, which should be followed because it is designed to help us become who we are meant to be.

After saying he did not come using clever human oratory, Paul now tells the Corinthians something no human being could work out, namely God's wisdom – his plan from the beginning for our salvation. Because this knowledge comes to us only by revelation, we must be open and listen to the Spirit who reveals it.

Continuing the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus states clearly that He is not abolishing the Jewish Law. But He then goes on to clarify the Commandments – we must obey them in spirit, not just a literal minimum. Our free will should be exercised with wisdom, so that we help to build the kingdom of God here on earth.

(Matthew 5:32 is usually understood to refer to marrying within forbidden degrees of kindred.)

Psalm Response: **They are happy who follow God's law!**

(Sirach/ Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20; Psalm 118(119); 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37)

Chris Oliver

# The Season of Creation

## Actions to Live Simply :

**Tip No. 41:** Living Sustainably with creation: Buy British seasonal produce to reduce intercontinental transportation of produce (particularly by air). The exception is FAIRTRADE labelled.

**Tip No. 32:** Solidarity with the poor: Please continue or start to donate tins and packets of food at Sunday Masses for the Hope centre kitchen and food bank.

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March is the CAFOD family fast day this year, and on the special envelopes this year and the posters is a picture of Sr Consilia, who lives and works in Zimbabwe. As a child, she caught Malaria, had then the nearest place for treatment was a long way away. Thankfully she recovered, and later trained as a pharmacist and cares for people with malaria, typhoid and other preventable diseases. She says: “I feel happy to be among the people. Through treating them and caring for them, I try to show them the love Christ shows us.”

**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**

## Saints this week

We are celebrating two saints' feast days and one other celebration; at first sight, an odd one. Why celebrate a chair? It is similar to the significance we place upon “the Crown” in this country, or “the Flag” in the United States. For us, “The Crown” is not a heavy and rather uncomfortable (we are told) piece of headwear, but symbolic of the supreme earthly authority in this land. Those in public service swear allegiance to “the Crown”, not to the item in the crown jewels but to the concept of the nation. The “crown” represents the unity of the nation, where all too often, the Government represents the divisions in the country. So the “Chair of St Peter” represents the unity of the Church: whatever differences we may have, we all share the spiritual allegiance to the successor of Peter, the one who (not literally, but symbolically) sits on the Chair of St Peter.

The chair of a Bishop is called a “Cathedra”, from which the building in which that chair is situated is called a “Cathedral”. On March 19<sup>th</sup> we will receive a new Bishop, and he will sit in his Cathedra. He received his appointment from Pope Francis, the successor of St Peter. Through our Bishop we remain in communion with Pope Francis and all other Catholic Bishops and people across the world. Hence we are “Catholic” (“Holos” means “Whole”) The Servite order, whose founders are commemorated on Monday were wealthy men of Florence who in 1240 decided to withdraw from the world and engages in prayer and penance. Today the Servite order runs parishes and engages in chaplaincies, with a vocation to proclaim the Gospel.

## Advance Notice

There will be 40 hours of continuous Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament starting at 7.00 am on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March, and ending at 11.00 pm on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

Those who are fit and able are asked to pray through the night of 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. Prayer groups and others will be asked to sign up so that there will always be people there

# The Year of the Word



The evening of the dinner raising funds for Wordfest is drawing near, and if there are tickets left, it would be good to get one! (This is being written in January!)

Whether or not you can get to the dinner, Wordfest will be an occasion not to be missed!

The purpose of the day is to help us to grow in our love for and knowledge of the Scriptures. This is a fundamental part of our Faith.

If you pray the Rosary, you are meditating on events described in the Bible. Before each decade, you could read those passages, and having read them, as you pray the decade, be meditating on what God wants you do take from your prayer.

There is a saying that “Prayer changes the Pray-er”; in praying, we ourselves should expect to be changed. “Lord, teach me your paths” (*Psalm 25:4*)

