



# 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

# Thank you, Deacon Rory!

It is with a degree of sadness that I have decided (with God’s guidance), to retire from my role as a Parish Deacon. After 30 years of fulfilling service in St. Gregory’s Parish, with a spell of 2 years in Olney Parish, the time is now right to realise, because of age and a degree of infirmity, that God is leading me into a different era of service. I am so grateful for all the love and friendship I have received from you all, along with your prayers. All of this has helped to sustain me through the ups and downs of a busy life. I thank God for you all. A special word of thanks to my dear wife Anne who has supported me throughout my Diaconal service and without whom I could not have given of my best.

## The Diaconate

One of the great decisions of ‘Vatican Two was to re-establish the Permanent Diaconate. For centuries, the Diaconate was seen as a step on the road to the priesthood, which of course it still is. But the Church foresaw an acute need to re-establish the Permanent Diaconate which would assist the Bishops and priests in their very busy ministry, especially in Parish life

My family and I came to this Parish in 1974, but it was in about 1986 when Father John Harris approached me after Sunday Mass and asked if I had ever thought of becoming a Deacon.

This question came out of the blue and took me by complete surprise. I had never ever thought about this and have to admit a degree of ignorance as to what the Diaconate was. I hastily assured him that I would think about it.

At that time we were blessed with a wonderful serving Deacon, Robin Cooper, who was also head of R.E. at Thomas Becket Upper School in Northampton. He was one of the very few early Deacons in our Diocese. His encouragement was much appreciated.

Having thought long and hard, and with much prayer, I agreed to put myself forward as a candidate for the Diaconate. My fellow Deacon, Michael Fleming also took the same decision, and we were both ordained at the same time here in St. Gregory’s in 1989

Life very soon took on a new dimension. Involvement in various aspects of Parish life meant a much deeper involvement in ‘new activities’. Quite apart from normal duties at the altar assisting the

priest, a broader aspect of Parish life needed my involvement. There were, and still are many parishioners who are housebound or are unable to attend regular Mass. Visiting these with Communion was a regular undertaking. This included various nursing homes in the town. Other activities included:

RCIA- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, whereby those wishing to become Catholics were prepared for this important step in their lives. I ran this course for a number of years.

At some stage Anne & I moved to Olney in Buckinghamshire. I have to say that life was just as busy there. I joined the Chaplaincy team at Bedford Prison, a role I undertook for some five years, even after we had moved back to St. Gregory’s. That role opened up new avenues of service and gave me a much deeper appreciation of human need.

After retirement from work, I could devote more time to Parish duties. As well as visiting with Communion, I was for a time involved in prayer groups. This gave me a personal joy as I began to see, and be involved in Charismatic Renewal. So much love and sharing transformed my understanding of togetherness in faith

My duties as a Chaplain at Cynthia Spencer Hospice, a role I have been privileged to undertake for some years, brought home to me the very essence of loving service. Here, at the very end of peoples lives, I have been blessed to share something of God’s love for every person, and I am truly humbled that He should use me as an instrument of His love.

My awareness of His abiding presence on the path He has chosen for me, fills me with complete trust for the future, even if I do not see clearly the path ahead. I thank God every day of my life for leading me thus far.

I appeal to those of you who may have contemplated the Diaconate but are unsure. Your Parish needs you. Your Diocese needs you. Christ needs you.

The Diaconate is the very essence of love and service.

Please pray for me and for all Deacons who wish to serve Christ through this ministry.

*Deacon Rory Stewart. (retired)!*



22 Park Avenue North  
Northampton. NN3 2HS  
**Website:** [www.stgregory.org.uk](http://www.stgregory.org.uk)

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**Parish Mass Book - Year A**  
**Page 26**

**Priest:**  
Fr Andrew Behrens ☎ 713015  
E-mail: [priest@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:priest@stgregory.org.uk)  
**Deacons:**  
Rev Michael Fleming ☎ 647750  
E-mail: [mvf@btinternet.com](mailto:mvf@btinternet.com)  
Rev Rory Stewart (ret) ☎ 408407  
**Pastoral Assistant:**  
Maria Heath ☎ 07952 040830  
E-mail: [maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk)

<b>Sunday</b> <i>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</i>	9.00 am	Mass	Dante Davighi
	11.00 am	Mass	The Parish
Monday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Ann Marie & Richard O'Neill's Intentions
Tuesday St. Francis Xavier	9.00 am	Mass (Followed by prayers for the sick)	Catherine Clarke
Wednesday St John Damascene	9.00 am	Mass	Connie Unsworth RIP
Thursday Feria	9.00 am	Celebration of Word & Communion	John Savage RIP
	6.45 pm	Benediction	
	7.00 pm	Mass	
Friday St Nicholas	9.00 am	Mass	Anna Falcone
Saturday St. Ambrose	9.00 am	Mass	Nancy & Mike Ginnelly RIP
	9.45 am	Confessions	
<b>Sunday</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</i>	9.00 am	Mass	The Parish
	11.00 am	Mass	Connie Unsworth RIP

**Your Offering To The Parish:**

**Standing Order gifts to the Parish:**

**Gift Aid benefits to the parish:**

**Counters This Week:**

**Cleaners This Week:**

Last Sunday's collection was £448.08. Thank you!

Each week £390 is given through standing orders.

The value of Gift Aid averages £133 per week.

M. Murtagh, L. Allen, Anna Smith.

Pru & Another.

**Readings and Rotas for this Sunday**

**Isaiah 2: 1-5.**

*The Lord will gather all nations together.*

**Romans 13: 11-14.**

*Our salvation is near.*

**Matthew 24: 37-44.**

*Stay awake so that you may be ready.*

**Readers:**

**9am:** EC, Heather McClue;

**11am:** Francess Nyaley, Jim Alibone.

**Eucharistic Ministers:**

**9am:** Chris Bird, Anne Gibson, Liam Condron, Kryisia Wilson;

**11am:** Phillip Ndekwe, Maggie Ndekwe, Denise Johnson, Mari Luz Martinez.

**Readings and Rotas for next Sunday**

**Isaiah 11: 1-10; Romans 15: 4-9; Matthew 3: 1.12. (Page 28)**

**Readers:**

**9am:** Jehanne Houghton, Praveen Matthew;

**11am:** Nithin Lukose, Maggie Ndekwe

**Eucharistic Ministers:**

**9am:** Tony Wittich, Margaret Wittich, Theresa Hudson, Pru Hill

**11am:** Rose Ogbata, Maureen Moriarty, Denise Johnson, Margaret Refoy.

**During this season of**

Teachers & Pupils; The Harvest;

**Ordinary Time, Autumn,**

The Spread of the Gospel; Victims of War

**We are asked to pray for:**

Prisoners & Their Families; Young People.

**In Hospital? Let the Chaplaincy know on 01604 714556**

If you are in need, please ring Gregory Care on 07982 235379,  
Someone will respond as soon as possible. Please be patient.

Are you new to the parish? You are welcome!  
Please introduce yourself to one of the clergy

**Advent Service, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 6pm at the Cathedral.**  
**involving the young people from Thomas Becket, St Mary's, St**  
**Gregory's and the Good Shepherd Catholic Schools. All welcome.**

**Please pray for the sick**

Please pray for all who are sick at this time, all who are victims of natural disaster or of human cruelty, and all for whom this is a difficult time of year.

**Anniversaries:**

**May they Rest in Peace**

Robert Pope	Bridget Connolly
Nora Runton	Edgar Dawson
Margaret Behan	Jozsef Demeter
John Devini	Elizabeth Nagle
Carmela Perrina	Linda Hall
Michael Brennan	Gertrude Browne
John Cregan	Sean Walsh
Patrick Prendergast	William Lack
Geoffrey Cumberpatch	Joseph O'Connell
Stefan Tymkiw	Alphonso Bryan
Margaret Thompson	Martha Kelly
Edith Philpot	Alan Newbery
Ellen Hancock	Charles Ford
Johnnie Green	Ann Bassi
William Windram	Helen Penny
Peter Sweeney	Florence Bradley
Stefan Szychta	Nora Walsh

**POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR**  
**DECEMBER**

That every country take the measures  
necessary to prioritize the future of the very  
young, especially those who are suffering.

# Notices of Interest

**The Repository:** From this Sunday, the Repository will be 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*



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Fox Andrew Couldry  
who received Christian Baptism last weekend.  
Please pray for him and his family.

**Bible Alive** for December 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.**

**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.

**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!

**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.**

**Mass, Rosary and Exposition** offered for Vocations at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Great Billing, **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 6pm.** Please join us and 'Pray the Lord of the Harvest to send labourers into the vineyard'. Refreshments available afterwards.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation Session will be on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 7pm, in the Sacristy.

**First Holy Communion — 2020** Congratulations to the children who celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time last week. It is also essential that children attend Mass each week.

**Confirmation Preparation:** Those interested in Confirmation in 2020 are invited to join the Youth Alpha programme. This isn't a compulsory part of the preparation, but it's an excellent & enjoyable prelude. Young people in Year 7 & above wishing to be Confirmed, should collect & complete a registration form from the hall after Mass. Forms will be available from 6th October. Please then attend one of the registration sessions after Masses on Sunday 10th or 17th November. (8am at St Anselm's, 9.15am at Our Lady's, 10.30am Sacred Heart and 9am and 11am at St Gregory's). 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:** To prepare for Christmas & Epiphany Masses & carols, there are extra practices after Mass on Thurs. evening till 9pm. These are Dec 5, 12, 19 then Feb 6 (no monthly practice on Jan 2). New singers always welcome & we gained one recently! *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.

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

**The Rehearsal for the Children's Christmas Eve** Mass will be during the Children's Liturgy at 9.00 am Mass on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

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

**Christian Counselling Courses at The Manna House** will be running in the New Year. Level 2 "Introduction to Christian Counselling" will start on 9<sup>th</sup> January and Level 3 "Advanced Christian Counselling" will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Full details, including prices etc are available in the Lobby area.

**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! Ceáid 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.

**General Election Hustings:** This afternoon, 4-5pm, at Castle Hill United Reform Church, Doddridge Street, NN1 2RN. All welcome. For further info please see <https://churches-together-northampton.org.uk/event/northampton-south-general-election-hustings/>

**There will be Carols & Mince Pies** at Thomas Becket Catholic School, Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, 12.30 pm. All welcome, but those who take Communion to the elderly are particularly invited.

**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.

**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.

**Information on local courses can be found at:**  
[www.bible-groups.info/timeline](http://www.bible-groups.info/timeline)

## St John Damascene (Celebrated on Wednesday this week)

St John of Damascus is not one of the better-known saints, but is a very important figure in the history of the Church. He has a particular significance in our generation, as a native of Damascus in Syria. He was born 45 years after the Arab and Muslim conquest of Syria in the seventh century, and although Christian, John's father was prominent in the court of the Caliph. John himself joined the community of the monastery of St Saba in Jerusalem.

Two specific important legacies that he has left are his writings on the Assumption of Our Lady and his opposition to iconoclasm. Pope Pius XII quoted him in his Apostolic Constitution on the Assumption in 1950.

Iconoclasm was a movement opposing the use and veneration of images (icons, pictures, statues) in the Church. John drew the distinction between 'worship' and 'veneration'. We may venerate an image as helping us to have a window into heaven, to inspire us to imitate the virtue of a particular saint and to encourage us in prayer. John wrote an important publication on the subject, and the long tradition in sacred art, both in the form of icons in the East and the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, and so many more are all inheritors of his legacy.

His life also speaks of the way in which Christian and Muslim can live in peace and harmony. May this be made real in our time.

## Scripture Readings 1st December 2019, 1st Sunday of Advent, Year A

During advent the first readings are from first Isaiah, mostly composed before 700 BC, a period when Israel was under attack from Assyria. Isaiah is critical of attempts by Israel's kings to control their destiny – he urges them to place their faith and trust in God, and in His promises to David. But God might use Israel's enemies to cleanse his people.

Nevertheless the people will survive through a remnant, like a stump of a tree, from which will come an ideal ruler in the future. In today's reading Isaiah looks forward to a peaceful time when all nations will be attracted by Israel's behaviour to accept God's authority, centred on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

The Psalm celebrates arriving in Jerusalem, goal of pilgrims and seat of government.

In his letter to the Romans Paul has been drawing out the implications of his image of Christians as all parts of one body. Since we are therefore dependant on each other we have a duty of love for each other. Judgement will come at any time, so we must live at all times as if all our actions are visible to all.

In Matthew's gospel, speaking on Mount Olivet just before the Last Supper, Jesus reinforces the need to "stay awake", ready for the Lord's coming.

Psalm Response: **I rejoiced when I heard them say: Let us go to God's house".**

(Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 121(122); Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44)

Chris Oliver

# The Season of Creation

### Actions to Live Simply :

Communication with eye contact melts 'Stranger fears'.

**Tip No. 17:** Live sustainably with Creation: Continue to recycle your redundant clothing and furniture etc through CHARITY shops. (The Hope Centre is grateful for clothing).

**Tip No. 18:** Live sustainably with Creation: have two or three meat free days a week to reduce the impact of deforestation, caused by the increasing demand for new farm land to grow animal feed crops.

### 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 winder 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 Year of the Word



This would not be happening without the generous support of the Bible Society, and there is one annual event which supports this, and it will be on Monday December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. at Christchurch on Wellingborough Road.

It is always a memorable occasion; the choir is provided by Northampton School for Girls, the readers are from St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, and there are popular congregational carols as well as some choir pieces. All are welcome.

