



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

When sorrows come, they come not single spies. But in battalions.

Shakespeare, Hamlet Act IV, scene 5



These are hard times for so many people. Thousands are enduring floods, forcing them to abandon their homes, and frequently with the loss of precious things; not so much the consumer goods that can be replaced, but the loss of precious photographs and other items carrying with them family memories, sometimes going back generations.

Then there are more than thousands who are affected by coronavirus; those who are ill, bereaved or have died, and those who are held in quarantine and isolation.

Beyond them, there are those whose business and employment is threatened by the disease and its epidemic.

That is just those things that the news media are telling us about. There is continued fighting in Syria and in many other places in the world; more refugees; more migrants.

The real origin of coronavirus in humans has yet to be discovered with certainty, but only a tiny number of eccentrics deny the reality of climate change, and the near-certainty that human activity is the chief cause of that change. Human activity is equally the cause of war.

In today's first reading we see the primal sin, again, in human activity. In the first readings at Mass on Friday and Saturday of last week, from Isaiah chapter 58, we heard about the sort of fast that God wants. This involves doing away with injustice, and links it to our support for fair trade. It involves letting the oppressed go free and links in with our care for refugees and migrants. It involves clothing the naked and giving bread to the hungry, and links in to our giving food and clothes to the Hope Centre. The fast that pleases God is not just a private affair, nor just a spiritual

effort, but is directed towards the realisation of our prayer that God's kingdom may come, and that his will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Climate change is a reality; we are experiencing "once in a hundred years" events far more frequently, almost every year we see weather records being broken, and most significantly, in all this, we see then poorest and most disadvantaged suffering most. This is particularly true in the developing world. In we are to be keeping the fast that pleases God, we need to be engaging in these issues in a direct way.

Last week we saw the Court of Appeal decide that the plan to build the third runway at Heathrow was unlawful. We are told that air traffic is one of the biggest contributors to the human carbon footprint, and the approval of HS2 and other less polluting means of transport must be better than increasing air travel. It is to be hoped that passengers will be given economic incentives to travel by more environmentally friendly means, such as public transport.

For the Church, this presents issues too. Here we struggle with a shortage of parking spaces, and in some places there are suggestions that large "out of town" churches with mega-car-parks are the answer to having fewer priests. However, should the Church be paying more attention to more environmentally friendly ways of getting to Mass, such as running bus services for Mass?

The Diocese of Salford is promoting practical suggestions for everyone during Lent. This is based on five "Rs"; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rewild and Reclaim. There is more information about this project at: <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/EnviroLent-Posters-for-parishes.pdf>

Corvid-19 (Coronavirus) precautions

Instructions to Eucharistic Ministers

It is essential for all Eucharistic Ministers to wash their hand thoroughly before Mass. Please use the Sacristy basin for this.

Advice for everyone

The best precaution we can all take is regular thorough hand-washing; Anti-bacterial gels do not protect against a virus. If you are unwell, please do not receive from the chalice.

Notices of Interest

The Repository: The Repository has now reverted to its normal pattern - 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*

Val Hanson's Requiem Mass will be held here at St. Gregory's on **Tues, 3rd March at 12pm**, followed by burial at East Haddon Cemetery.



We welcome into the family of the Church
William Gjoka
who received Christian Baptism last week.
Please pray for him and his family.

Bible Alive for 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.**

A Big Thank You To everyone who sponsored me for the Sleep Out this year for the **HOPE CENTRE** I have raised £2290.00 Thank for your kind donations and support as well. I have put a copy of the letter of thanks from the Hope Centre at the entrances and the Lobby area. *Siobhan O'Donovan.*

More Thank You-s: Thank you from the Palestinian Olive Wood sale; £435 was raised from sales. Thank you to everyone who helped or came to the Wordfest Dinner on Shrove Tuesday; over £600 has been raised to help the entry cost for people from the parish to come to this wonderful Scripture Festival on June 6th at Thornton College. There is more about this opposite. (Year of the Word)



Fairtrade Fortnight: Fairtrade Fortnight continues. Please try to buy traded products wherever possible. There is a display in the Lobby area and a poster with details of the good being done by the Fairtrade Foundation!

Multi Academy Trusts: Bishop Peter welcomes new Multi Academy Trusts – 1st Feb. sees the formation of two Multi Academy Trusts in the diocese. Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT) will cover schools in Bedford, Northampton town & Northants, & St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust (STCAT) will cover Luton, Central Bed. & Slough. Around half of our schools are currently members of these new MATs and it is the Bishop's wish that all schools join in time. For more info. about your local Catholic school & the new MATs check the NORES website or contact us on admin@nores.org.uk

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.**

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

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

Life House Quiz With Fish & Chip Supper: A quiz with Fish & chips supper in aid of the Life House will take place on Friday 6th March in St. Gregory Church. 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.

During 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. Starts at 7.30 pm. On Fridays through Lent there will be our usual shared Stations of the Cross with St Matthew's, starting at 7.30 pm.

40 Hours of Prayer: Thurs 12th March 7am to Friday 13th March 11pm. During the 40 hours the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed & people are invited to make extra time to pray during the day or night. Come on your own or come as a group. There will be a sign-up sheet available. Come and pray silently or lead some music/ bible reflection/a decade of the Rosary etc. If you plan to lead a time of prayer please add that on the sign-up sheet so others know about it. Thank you! Masses will continue at the normal times. There will be an extra Mass at 10pm on the Friday evening. For more information please see Maria Heath or one of the Alpha team.

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day on Fri. 6th March is the 60th anniversary of the first Family Fast Day led by our founding mothers (one from our very own diocese!) &, as it has been for sixty years, is an opportunity to reach out & support highly-skilled local experts around the world who help the poorest members of our global family. Please collect a Family Fast Day envelope this week & give whatever you can to help experts like Sister Consilia - a nun & trained pharmacist who treats people in Zimbabwe - continue their vital work.

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!

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 1st 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*

Bible Timeline courses. 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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation Session will be reported here soon.

First Holy Communion — 2020 The next preparation session for children is on Saturday 29th February at Sacred Heart Church Hall, from 2.00 pm until 4.30 pm. It is also essential that children attend Mass each week.

Confirmation - 3rd Preparation Session: Saturday 21st 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.

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

Scripture Readings 1st March 2020, 1st Sunday of Lent, Year A

From Genesis we have the second and probably older description of the creation of humanity. This expresses the truth that God made us as “living beings”. By eating the forbidden fruit, man does “become like God”, able to make choices, but without the wisdom needed to choose well. Perhaps like a child’s growing self-awareness. The mischievous serpent later came to be interpreted as Satan.

This penitential psalm begs pardon for our sins, asking to be restored to grace and purity, and promising to make God’s mercy known to others.

Paul has been arguing to the Romans that righteousness comes only through faith. Human beings are unable to become righteous by following the Law given to Moses, which identifies – but does not help to avoid – sin. God offers righteousness as gift, through Jesus’ obedience to his Father.

In Matthew’s Gospel the devil introduces each temptation with the words: “If you are the Son of God”, exploring what can it mean for Jesus to be “Son of God”? Is he a miracle-worker, able to satisfy all desires without effort? Is it about showy displays of power or trying to make God do what we want, in return for belief in him? Jesus dismisses Satan, showing his real power. Jesus will rule over all creation, but only through the Cross.

Psalm Response: **Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.**

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Psalm 50(51); Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Actions to Live Simply :

Tip No. 45: Living Sustainably with creation: Now we are in the season of LENT Let us deny ourselves a few luxuries and put the money saved, weekly in a CAFOD envelope.

Tip No. 46: Living Sustainably with creation: We have recently witnessed the devastating floods, which are a part of Climate Change, Keep the people suffering in your prayers.

The CAFOD Lent fast day appeal will help to support the healthcare work in Zimbabwe, and CAFOD has already given £50,000 in emergency response. Pope Francis has been reminding us that the poorest people suffer disproportionately from climate change and natural disasters; please be generous, and keep up the fast each week during Lent.

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

Although in Lent, we commemorate SS Perpetua and Felicity.

“When my father in his affection for me was trying to turn me from my purpose by arguments and thus weaken my faith, I said to him, ‘Do you see this vessel—waterpot or whatever it may be? Can it be called by any other name than what it is?’ ‘No,’ he replied. ‘So also I cannot call myself by any other name than what I am—a Christian.’”

So writes Perpetua: young, beautiful, well-educated, a noblewoman of Carthage in North Africa, mother of an infant son and chronicler of the persecution of the Christians by Emperor Septimius Severus.

Perpetua’s mother was a Christian and her father a pagan. He continually pleaded with her to deny her faith. She refused and was imprisoned at 22.

In her diary, Perpetua describes her period of captivity: “What a day of horror! Terrible heat, owing to the crowds! Rough treatment by the soldiers! To crown all, I was tormented with anxiety for my baby.... Such anxieties I suffered for many days, but I obtained leave

for my baby to remain in the prison with me, and being relieved of my trouble and anxiety for him, I at once recovered my health, and my prison became a palace to me and I would rather have been there than anywhere else.”

Despite threats of persecution and death, Perpetua, Felicity—a slavewoman and expectant mother—and three companions, Revocatus, Secundulus and Saturninus, refused to renounce their Christian faith. For their unwillingness, all were sent to the public games in the amphitheater. There Perpetua and Felicity were beheaded, and the others killed by beasts.

Felicity gave birth to a girl a few days before the games commenced.

Perpetua’s record of her trial and imprisonment ends the day before the games. “Of what was done in the games themselves, let him write who will.” The diary was finished by an eyewitness.

Advance Notice

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

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

The Year of the Word



Many thanks to everyone who helped or supported in any way the Shrove Tuesday dinner which was raising money for Wordfest on 6th June. In every way the event was a success, and we have a good sum of money to buy tickets for the event.

In the next week a notice will go up in the display area inviting those who wish to go to Wordfest. The parish will then make a

block booking, and the money raised last week will probably cover the entire entry cost, or at least provide a significant subsidy. However, it will not provide transport, but when the booking is made, it would be sensible for as few cars as possible to make the journey, and car-sharing can be arranged.



Thomas Becket class of 1980 are holding a 40 year reunion at Semilong working men's club on 11th 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>