



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**

Some of Our Charities

This parish supports a number of charities on a regular basis, and it is good to keep up with the work that they are doing. There are others that we support through second collections; that they are not included here is not in any way to suggest that they are less important!

CAFOD

Right now, 844 million people are living without access to clean water. 2.3 billion lack something as basic as a toilet and sewage system to flush away their waste. 31% of schools don't have clean water and around the world up to 443 million school days are lost every year because of water-related illnesses. We are in the midst of a global water and sanitation crisis.

Lack of access to water threatens people's health and dignity. Having to walk long distances to fetch water stops women and girls from earning a living or going to school.

We believe that water is precious, and so should be shared by all people on earth. Our vision is that all human beings, without distinction or discrimination, have access to safe water and sanitation.

The supply of water is directly linked to climate change, and CAFOD has been campaigning for action on this for many years. We need to work together to go further, faster to end climate change. Together we Catholics can turn the tide. We can treat our home with respect by leading the way, taking responsibility and forging new habits. We can call on politicians to go further and faster with emissions cuts. Please visit the CAFOD website to see what you can do to help.

MISSIO

All over the world, there are change-makers dedicated to working on the frontline of service for the world's most vulnerable communities. This wonderful team of religious Sisters and Brothers, priests and lay-leaders provides essential education and health care, social outreach and advocacy, and pastoral service. In every moment they offer spiritual comfort to the suffering and marginalised. Each year the need outstrips the ability to help these change-makers. Our contributions goes towards meeting this need. This Christmas Missio is particularly supporting the work of the Sisters of Nazareth caring for orphaned or abandoned children in South Africa.

THE HOPE CENTRE

The Hope Centre is enormously grateful to the parish for the regular supply of food and other items, and especially for the recent supply of warm clothing. It is estimated that there are 60 rough-sleepers in Northampton every night and that 1 in 4 families skip meals due to food poverty. The average life expectancy of a rough-sleeper is just 47 years. Through Christmastide our Crib donations are all given to the Hope Centre. There are many ways in which the Hope Centre seeks to address the problems of homelessness; their web-site gives an indication of the scope and scale of their activities.

<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/what-we-do/>

GREGORY CARE

Just an update and a thank you, to all who have supported us throughout year. We have just donated food vouchers and gifts to 19 children/families for Christmas, as well as many families and individuals over the year by helping with food, clothes, electricity and gas.

Your generosity is very much appreciated and planning ahead for 2020 we hope to help many more families who struggle to manage due to homeless and lack of funds for things we take for granted, through working in partnership with our local Catholic Schools. Thank you also to the Repository for the very generous donation.

It is true to say “The more you give away, the more you receive”

Karuri School

This is one of most joyful moments in the history of our school. At last, we have opened our new dining hall. We had a beautiful celebration, with cakes and sodas. Thank you - we are celebrating your work. I am in tears of joy. My dear friends, you are a size of a mustard seed and Divine Providence is making a huge difference in one part of Africa, through you. Thank you so much. We are going to use the dining hall, but we aren't able to use the kitchen yet. The builders need to shift the cooking pots, which will be done over the course of the December holiday. We are over the moon. We have enough space to play the indoor games we've been sent, like darts and table tennis. God bless each one of you.

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*



We welcome into the family of the Church
Ann Chiamaka Amarachi Graham
who received Christian Baptism last weekend.
Please pray for her and her family.

Catholic Newspapers - Important Announcement: As reported last week, this is the last week that Catholic newspapers will be available to buy at the church. 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. There are a number of on-line Catholic news services, among them, ICN, the Independent Catholic News (www.indcatholicnews.com) 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.

Bible Alive for 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.**

Film at Sacred Heart. Friday 3rd 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.

Christmas Flowers: Envelopes 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 – one tray is still available, in the Sacristy after Mass this 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.**

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

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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

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

First Holy Communion — 2020 The next preparation session for children is on Saturday 11th 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: The next practice will be Feb 6, then Lent preparation for Easter: Mar 5, 12, 19, 26, Apr 2, followed by 1st Thurs of the month: May 7, etc. New members always welcome especially if they sing & 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 wpcurie@btinternet.com or leave your details with Father Andrew.

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children- 'Tiny

Feet' coffee morning: Please come to our coffee morning from 10.30am on Saturday 25th January, in the parish hall at St Gregory's, in order to help us raise funds for SPUC. Apart from the chance to socialise, eat good cake and escape Saturday morning chores, it will be an opportunity to find out more about the work of SPUC and meet your local members. Even if you may not be able to become directly involved in pro-life work, your support of this event will be a vital contribution in our efforts to spread the pro-life message. Please keep us and all unborn children in your prayers.

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 25th 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. 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

There will be a new Christmas Newsletter available on Christmas Day covering the following week.

Between Sunday and Christmas there are no celebrations of saints

Scripture Readings 22nd December 2019, 4th Sunday of Advent, Year A

First Isaiah was writing before 700 BC, when Judah was under attack. Isaiah promises that a time of peace will come when Israel returns to living simply, with no riches to make others envious. But only if they keep their faith in God. Without being asked, God gives King Ahaz a sign of his support: a young woman will bear a son, to be named Emmanuel, "God with us". Israel will still suffer. But a remnant of David's house will survive, like the stump of a fallen tree.

After praising God's universal dominion the psalm gives moral requirements for assisting at divine worship.

Paul begins his letter to the Jewish Christian community in Rome very carefully. They did not know him, so he assures them that he

shares their beliefs, especially that Jesus, a descendant of David, is the Christ, proclaimed Son of God through his resurrection.

Before Matthew describes Jesus' birth, he lists 42 ancestors linking Jesus firmly with Abraham, David and Israel's kings. The list includes four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah. Through their unconventional behaviour, a remnant of David's line survived, reminding us of the important roles women have always played in God's plan.

Psalm Response: **Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.**

(Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 23(24); Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Actions to Live Simply :

Communication with eye contact melts 'Stranger fears'.

Tip No. 25: Live sustainably with creation: one aeroplane flight adds to climate change, as much as a typical year's worth of driving.

Make a New Year resolution, for the sake of your children and grandchildren, to stop non-essential flying. In Europe take the train.

Tip No. 26: Actions to LiveSimply: Stuck for a Christmas present idea? Give a homemade item or card!

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

Oops! Need a last Minute Christmas Gift?

CAFOD world gifts can be delivered by email and arrive within minutes. They don't need wrapping, nor postage.

The Year of the Word



The name "Emmanuel" occurs in both the first reading and the Gospel for today, and we are told that it means "God is with us". This we understand is fulfilled in the incarnation, God becomes man in the person of Jesus; or as St John describes it, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (*John 1:14*).

The liturgical greeting we hear at every Mass (no less than four times) is an echo of this title of Jesus. "The Lord be with you" could equally be written as "The Lord is with you", or as "God is with you". We are proclaiming the presence of God.

It is important for us to recognise that God is close at hand, not remote. This is the deep and wonderful significance of the incarnation; of what we are celebrating at Christmas.

So many who say that they do not believe in God have rejected an idea of God which is not a Christian one at all. During Lent next year there will be a chance to join a course led by Bishop Robert Barron on "The Mystery of God", and after Easter, to invite a friend to join you in the Alpha course, where this is developed in terms of our practical life.

This would be an excellent way of celebrating the "Year of the Word". [Alpha starts on April 21st and runs on Tuesday evenings.]

