



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

Welcome to Bishop David

Our new shepherd and guide

David James Oakley was born on 28th November, 1955 in Stourbridge. He is the eldest of five children to Joyce and Fred Oakley. The family moved to Birmingham when David was 7 years old. After school, he worked in a well-known department store and entered Oscott in September 1974. Fr David was ordained on 5th July 1980 and has served in several parishes within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. He has always suggested that the parish is his natural habitat. Fr David studied



catechetics at the Maryvale Institute and was awarded a MEd degree. He was appointed Pastoral Director and Procurator at Oscott in 1994. During this time he researched a PhD thesis in Pastoral Theology, which was later published. As Parish Priest at Maryvale, Fr David directed the diocesan Department for Parish and Family Catechesis, developing resources in collaboration with CaFE. At the same time, he undertook licentiate studies in the Pontifical University of St Patrick's, Maynooth and was awarded the STL degree. Since February 2013, he has

been the twenty-third Rector of Oscott.

Bishop David's Coat of Arms

The Shield

The shield shows two coats of arms impaled, that is, placed alongside each other. On the left as one looks at the shield are the arms of the diocese of Northampton showing three fleurs-de-lis in the 'chief' or top of the shield, with three choughs in the base. The fleurs-de-lis are to signify Our Lady and the three birds are taken from the arms borne by, or attributed to, St Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162-1170. On the right as one looks at the shield are the arms of Bishop David Oakley. In the 'chief' or top of the shield is the cross of St Chad, patron saint of the Archdiocese of Birmingham where his relics are enshrined in the Metropolitan Cathedral and where Bishop David served as a Canon in the Metropolitan Chapter. Beneath the cross is a lion rampant signifying the Lion of the tribe of Judah, King David's house and line from which was born the Messiah. It is a reference to Bishop David's own name as is the green 'field' or base colour behind the cross and the lion: the latter part of the name Oakley can mean a meadow, a field, or a clearing in a wood.



Galero

The hat that ensigns the arms is a galero, the medieval headgear of a bishop and it is shown with twelve tassels and in green, signifying a bishop.

Processional Cross

Behind the shield is displayed a processional cross signifying the bishop's rank.

Motto

Bishop David chose as his motto *Beati Pauperes Spiritu* 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'. The Beatitudes define our relationship with Jesus Christ and also the way we live in relationship with the world around us as disciples of the Lord. *The coat of arms of Bishop David Oakley was designed with the help and assistance of Fr Edmund Montgomery, a priest of the*

diocese of Shrewsbury, and conforms to the directive of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, Ut Sive Sollicite of 1969 'On the Dress, Titles, and Coats of Arms of Cardinals, Bishops and Lesser Prelates'.

Notices of Interest

The Repository: The repository will be opened when the Parish Office is staffed, that is on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.30 until 12.30. There is a slot for money to the right of the door to the sacristy. Easter cards are now available. 1st Communion and Confirmation cards & items will be on display from Monday. April 6th. Any queries phone Kathleen Healey 01604 629103.

An important notice regarding the celebration of Mass:
We are instructed that there will be no public Masses during the present crisis; however Mass will continue to be said daily as the normal times, and we hope to stream this on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>
We are also told that the church should be open during the day, and that does include the time when Mass is being said. However, since it cannot be a public Mass, we cannot encourage anyone to come at that time, and cannot give Holy Communion then.

Holy Water: If you want Holy Water to take home, the bucket is in the Sacristy. Please ask after the advertised Mass times.

Bible Alive for Lent & Easter 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.**

Hope Centre: The needs of the homeless are not changed during this emergency. Please continue to bring donations to church, and they will be taken down to the Hope Centre regularly. The Hope Centre can no longer accept pillows, duvets, sheets or towels. Please do, however, continue to donate clothes – especially coats. Clothing can be left at the Hope Centre Charity Shop in Abington Street. Thank you!

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: The regular Thursday adoration is not taking place during this present emergency, but please do come in to church to pray at any time during any day.

Rosary Link prayer for vocations: The next Rosary Link Mass here is scheduled for 7.00 pm on Monday 1st June. However it is unlikely that the present restrictions will be lifted by then. Please make your own prayers for vocations; the need is great!

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.

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please contact Deacon Michael direct (01604) 647750, E-mail: mvf@btinternet.com for information.

First Holy Communion – 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation – 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

SPUC Pro-Life Chain, Sat. 25th April. SPUC Northampton are forming a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way. It will be a silent act of witness to the lives of 9 million unborn babies killed by abortion since the implementation of the Abortion Act 1968. Please join us. To make the chain we need a min. 6 people & being a group of four we need your help. Please help us in this witness, from 11am to 1pm but you could join us at any time. If you can help, please contact William wpcurie@btinternet.com or 499833, or give your name to Fr. Andrew. If we could save the life of just 1 baby or help a woman who has suffered trauma following an abortion then there will be great rejoicing in Heaven. **Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of the Unborn - pray for us.**

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.

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=ebdssbdestsear>

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

Live-stream Mass from Lourdes
https://www.directfromlourdes.com/lourdes_live_tv

Readings, homily and Spiritual Communion
<https://www.lentinisolation.com/videos>

EWTN
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

On participating in Mass on-line or through television

For most of us, it is a new experience to participate in Mass over the internet or on television. It is important not to be in the mindset of simply “watching television” or “watching a film”. The Church as always asked for “active participation”, and the medium of television make this quite difficult.

It is better if you can avoid sitting in an armchair or on a sofa, and try to adopt the same postures as you would in church (sitting, standing or kneeling), and to speak the responses; please do not simply be a viewer. On the back page of this newsletter is a simple prayer of Spiritual Communion.

Scripture Readings 22nd March 2020, 4th Sunday in Lent, Year A

Before our first reading King Saul had disobeyed God's instructions by allowing animals from his defeated enemy to be sacrificed to the Lord. He put more faith in ceremony and ritual than he did in the Lord. Samuel told Saul obedience is more important than holocausts, and that the Lord has rejected Saul as king of Israel. The Lord sends Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king.

The psalm celebrates God's loving care for his people, like a shepherd guarding and guiding his flock, and looking forward to his generous end-time feast.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is centred on the Church as Christ's body, with a mission to make God's plan of salvation known throughout the world. Christians must "be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in goodness, right living and truth".

John's dramatic gospel readings continue with the healing of the man born blind, who, at first, appears to take little interest. His parents distance themselves out of fear, echoing the growing separation between Jews and Christians by John's time. But for John, just seeing is not enough, the light of faith is essential. So Jesus seeks the man out and gradually leads him to full belief, and so to worship him.

Psalm Response: **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

(1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13; Psalm 22(23); Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Actions to Live Simply :

Tip No. 49: Living Sustainably with creation: Make the first input for the day a reading from scripture and prayer so that other news is put in perspective.

Tip No. 50: Solidarity with the poor: Donations to CAFOD, to support people around the world, can be posted, given on the CAFOD website, or put in the CAFOD wall boxes in church.

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

A message from Walsingham

I am delighted to be able to share with you a message from Pope Francis which has been sent to Cardinal Nichols. The Holy Father "prays that the act of re-dedication will inspire all to persevere in the urgent task of sharing the joy of the Gospel with the men and women of our time". The Holy Father once more entrusts "Mary's Dowry" to her maternal protection and willingly imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in the Lord.

In 1893 Pope Leo XIII wrote about "the love which burnt within the heart of your forefathers towards the great Mother of God ... to whose service they consecrated themselves with such abundant proofs of devotion, that the kingdom itself acquired the singular and highly honourable title of 'Mary's Dowry'". Later he prophesied that "When England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England".

I realise that in the light of the restrictions under which we now operate the Re-dedication will now not take place at the Sunday Mass, but it is a prayer that can take place anywhere and indeed anytime. I invite you to encourage your people to take part in whatever way they can, whenever they can. A range of resources, including the livestream and prayers for the Re-dedication, are all available from www.behold2020.com.

Walsingham Live will be streaming from the Basilica 24/7, with a timetable of prayers, devotions, and Mass available. This means that those who are isolating can make their own pilgrimage at home. This stream, along with more content, can be found at www.LentInIsolation.com.

In the midst of such current turmoil and fear, we once again turn to the one that God called Mother, seeking her guidance and protection. The Re-dedication is a timely moment, where we will join with our

brothers and sisters in prayer from all over the world, confident that Mary our Mother leads us to do the will of Her Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I believe the message of Our Lady at Walsingham, which is to "Share my Joy in the Annunciation", can bring much comfort to our people. Mary rejoices because "he who is mighty has done great things for me" and we can, even in the present difficulties, draw strength from that.

I would like to reflect on the story of the Annunciation which I believe will be a great source of strength and comfort for us and our people at this moment in time. Our Lady was faced with a challenge that caused her to be "greatly troubled" at the prospect of being God's Mother, asking "How can this be?". Gabriel reassures her, "Do not be afraid, Mary", and explains that "the power of the Most High will cover you for nothing is impossible for God".

At this moment in history, our people are indeed "greatly troubled": many are afraid and wondering what the future will hold. Gabriel responded to Mary's anxieties with a message that gave her hope because it was "Good News". This News is not simply the account of what is happening in the world – like a TV bulletin - but is an insight and wisdom that strengthened Mary, and enabled her to respond to God's will. When we open ourselves to God's Spirit, we find that all things are possible for God. In the midst of the turmoil of her times and the anxiety of her heart, this message sets Mary free and gives her the confidence to say, "Let it be done to me according to Your Word". This is Mary's Joy, and she wishes to share it with us!

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Mgr John Armitage
Rector

**A Blessing today on all mothers:
May the Mother of Jesus pray for
you, and her Son bless you.**

