



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.”**

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VISION

Ready for Lent?

Before the reform of the calendar in 1970 this Sunday was called Quinquagesima — meaning in round numbers fifty days before Easter, part of a sort of ‘mini-Lent’. With the abolition of this designation of these Sundays, Ash Wednesday can take us a little by surprise. Like red and yellow on traffic lights, a warning that a change is about to happen is useful! During this Lent we have two unusual highlights; the episcopal ordination of our new Bishop and the re-dedication of England as Mary’s Dowry. We are also continuing in our celebration of the Year of the Word.

Lent is a season for us to make use of; it is not a time of misery for misery’s sake. The time that Our Lord spent in the wilderness was to help he prepare for the task that lay ahead. For us, it can be a time of taking on new responsibilities or deepening our sense of commitment.

Below is a calendar of events during Lent. Please do not think of it as simply a season for “giving something up”, but consider “doing something extra”. If you need to give up something to make time to do the extra, that please do so, but it is the extra that counts!

Tuesday 25th February: Shrove Tuesday
Mass at 9.00 am, followed by prayers for the sick
Biblical Walk with Mary course continues in the Sacristy at 10.00.
“Wordfest” dinner in the hall, 7.30 pm. (See inside for details.)

Wednesday 26th February: Ash Wednesday
Mass at 7.00 am, 9.00 am and 7.00 pm with ashes at each Mass
A day of fast and abstinence — fasting means only one meal and (if necessary) two small snacks. Abstinence means no meat. At the heart of this means recognizing the deprivation that Jesus endured in the wilderness, and sharing with him in this.

Friday 28th February
Mass at 9.00 am and 2.20 pm
Stations of the Cross at 7.30 pm
Our shared Stations of the Cross St Gregory’s (With St Matthew’s).
Through Lent has been a part of our programme for many years.

Sunday 1st March: 1st Sunday of Lent
Mass at 9.00 am and 11.00 am
Stations of the Cross at 4.30 pm in church.
This will be the programme for each Sunday in Lent

Tuesday 3rd March
Mass at 9.00 am, followed by prayers for the sick
First session of the “Mystery of God” course at 7.00 pm. This is a really worthwhile course for any who have already attended ‘Alpha’ or any Bible Timeline course, but all are welcome.

Friday 6th March
CAFOD family fast day. Please talk about this in your families. The idea is to go without one meal and give the money saved to CAFOD to help those who have no choice but to go without food.
Stations of the Cross at St Matthew’s, Kettering Road at 7.30 pm
This continues each week, alternating venues.

Sunday 8th March
Mass at 9.00 am and 11.00 am. Special collection for CAFOD.
This is our Catholic fund for overseas aid and development.

Tuesdays 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st March
Mass at 9.00 am, followed by prayers for the sick
Subsequent session of the “Mystery of God” course at 7.00 pm.

Thursday 12th March at 7.00 am until Friday 13th March at 11.00 pm
40 Hours continuous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Thursday 19th March: Feast of St Joseph
Episcopal Ordination of our new Bishop, David Oakley in the Cathedral at 11.00 am. Limited numbers in the Cathedral, but it will be live-streamed and can be watched at home on the internet.

Wednesday 25th March: The Annunciation of the Lord
Mass at 9.00 am, followed by refreshments in the Hall.
During the Mass there will be an opportunity for personal consecration to Our Lady.

Sunday 29th March: 5th Sunday of Lent
Parish consecration to Our Lady at each Mass.

Those who are using the “33 days to Morning Glory: please keep it up

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*

VALERIE HANSON RIP

The Requiem Mass for Valerie will be held at St. Gregory's Church on Tuesday, 3rd March at 12 noon, followed by burial at East Haddon Cemetery.

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 £1290.00 Thank for your kind donations and support as well. *Siobhan O'Donovan.*



Fairtrade Fortnight: Fairtrade Fortnight begins tomorrow. 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.

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.

YOUCAT for kids! There is a fantastic new resource for anybody involved in bringing up children in the faith- 'YOUCAT for kids'. It's aimed at those involved with children under secondary school age; the cost is £10:50 for what will prove to be an excellent resource.

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.

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. 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**

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 23rd February 2020, 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Leviticus means “and he called”. The book is about holiness, the utter separateness of God. We are each called to become whole, like a jigsaw with all the parts fitting together perfectly. Hence the repeated command: “You shall be holy, because I, the Lord, am holy”. These chapters about the sacredness of sex, the marriage laws, forbidding aberrant sexual behaviour, and expanding the basic Commandments, show how the Israelites are to keep themselves in a state of wholeness, as a sign of their intimate union with the Holy Lord. These detailed instructions on behaviour imply both responsibilities and corresponding rights.

Perhaps we can see why Paul is critical of the Corinthians, telling them they were not mature enough to be given the solid food of spiritual instruction, because they were still jealously quarrelling among themselves about who to follow. They must follow only

Christ, obeying God’s rules, even though this will be seen as foolishness by the wisdom of this world.

In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus continues drawing out the meaning of the Commandments in the Sermon on the Mount. Last week the shorter form omitted the difficult teachings forbidding divorce and calling our brother a fool. Today we are urged to love our enemies. Always Jesus pushes us further, urging us towards perfection, in union with our heavenly Father.

Psalm Response:

**The Lord is
compassion and love.**

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Matthew 5:38-48

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Actions to Live Simply :

Tip No. 43: Actions to Live Simply : Communication with eye contact melts ‘Stranger fears’. Introduce yourself and ask another parishioner their name.

Tip No. 44: Living Sustainably with creation: Say, ‘Thanks’, more often than you would normally do.

Climate Change is causing a devastating drought in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and up to half the population of those countries are on the brink of starvation. 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; one example of this is that where bread can be bought in Zimbabwe it now costs 15 times more than it did a year ago. For us, that would mean a cost of up to £15 for a loaf. For the poorest people, even bread is unaffordable.

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

No Saints this week — during Lent the Church encourages us to concentrate on the season.

Ash Wednesday could not be called a “Saint’s Day”; it actually has a near-unique status as being a non-feast day that cannot be moved or replaced. This is because it is the first day in the year whose date depends on Easter. From the beginning of Advent until Ash Wednesday, all Christian feast-days have depended on the ordinary calendar; that is day or date, but fixed each year. Ash Wednesday is always the Wednesday six and a half weeks before Easter. The determination of the date of Easter was formulated by the First Council of Nicaea in the year 325. Simply put, it is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. There are a sequence of celebrations that follow a set number of days after Easter; Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christi, and the Sacred Heart. By then we are back into ‘Ordinary Time’, and saints’ days fall according to the day and month.

There are many who argue that the moveable date of Easter should be abolished and fixed on a particular date, the same each year. Schools, in particular find the variation in term lengths as Easter is earlier or later a great inconvenience. This is, of course, an attempt to remove another pillar of the Christian heritage we have, and further to secularise our society. However, if people do not celebrate the Christian festivals, why should society work around them. While this is not in itself a reason why we have a great need to evangelise, it might be a spur for us. The truth is that we must evangelise because Jesus told us to; but when we see the results of a failure to spread the Gospel, we should see the importance to the command that Jesus gave, to “go out and proclaim the Good News”

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



Through Lent the readings at Mass are thematic, on Ash Wednesday relating to the overall observance of Lent, on Thursday about the choice facing us between good and evil, blessing and curse, saving our life or losing it. On Friday the theme is fasting, and on Saturday the significance of conversion and repentance.

We have readings from Joel, Deuteronomy and Isaiah from the Old Testament, from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians in the New Testament and from Matthew and Luke for the Gospel readings. We can all make following the Scriptures a part of our Lent actions.

