



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

Mary's Dowry

In 1381 King Richard II dedicated England to Mary as her Dowry. Today England will be re-dedicated to her. It will take place at the National Catholic Shrine, the Basilica of Our Lady in Walsingham at 12 noon — now behind closed doors because of coronavirus restrictions.

At this worrying time in our history as a nation, under the threat of this pandemic and deprived of the ability to attend Holy Mass because of the health risks, Catholics throughout England are invited to join the Act of Rededication of this country to Mary as her Dowry. Please to join in the prayers and to participate in this loving act in your home, if possible at 12 noon, but otherwise at a later time.

You can download the full text for this from the parish website, together with an A4 copy of the icon, which you may like to print, and maybe to frame or stick onto a card.

The word “Dowry” in this context is not connected to the idea of a gift to the husband of a new bride; the Latin “Dos” simply means “gift” — we get the word “donation” from it.

King Richard II made this donation of England to Our Lady in the face of a national crisis; the Peasant's Revolt. Today, in the face of another crisis, we confirm that donation.



In the new icon, Our Lady is dressed in Anglo-Saxon clothes, and above her is the coat of arms of King Edward the Confessor. At her feet is the kneeling figure of Richeldis, offering her the Holy House which she had built. Mary looks down on her lovingly, while Jesus looks out to us, and holds the book of Scripture; perhaps a message to us in this ‘Year of the Word’.

At Our Lady's feet is a toad. This is a modern representation of what Erasmus described when he made a pilgrimage to the shrine in 1512: Beneath the feet of Our Lady, he reported, is a ‘toadstone’. This was a green jewel with a picture of a toad carved into it. If explaining this, he said: “because all filthiness, malice, pride, avarice, and whatever belongs to human passion, has been subdued, trodden underfoot, and extinguished.” (Quoted in

The toad replaced the serpent in the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, and represents the fulfilment of the words of God that the offspring of the woman shall strike the serpent's head (*Genesis 3:15*).

In our present time of crisis, we, the Catholic faithful of England turn to Mary for protection, just as King Richard II did in 1381. However, sadly, the majority of our country will not be part of this. It must be a spur to our task of evangelisation. “The faith in England will flourish when the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham is flourishing (*Cardinal Griffin*)”

Notices of Interest

The Repository: The repository will, unfortunately, be shut until such time as we can re-open the Church.

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 at the normal times, and we hope to stream this on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>.

We have now been instructed to close the Church, although this will not affect the Mass being said privately by Fr. Andrew. Please do consider making your donations via one of the links below, remembering to state the Parish name of St. Gregory the Great, Northampton.

Notice from the Diocese

Online Donation: The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/> (scroll down on the home page to the Donate button)

Standing Order via Donor's Own Bank. You can set up a standing order for donations to your parish using either your on line bank account or in branch. The information required to make the donation is as follows:

Bank; NatWest
Sort Code; 60-06-11
Account Number; 46898093
Account Name; Northampton Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust
Payment Ref; Parish Name/Area: (St. Gregory's, Northampton)

More on parish finances: We are approaching the end of the financial year, and there will be a statement of accounts in the next few weeks. In the meanwhile, bills still need to be paid! If you are able, and you use planned giving envelopes, you can post them through the presbytery letter box. However, it is much better if you can make a standing order through your own bank. Please do make sure that you fill in the account number accurately!

The Office: Whilst I will continue to come in to the Office as usual, the church now being closed means that I cannot speak to anyone with problems/Mass Intention requests, face to face. However, I will be, as always, available on the phone or by email. The phone number is (01604)713015 & choose option 1. My email address is secretary@stgregory.org.uk.

God bless and stay safe. *Caryll*

Bible Alive for Lent & Easter is now available. It has daily readings & good articles - all for only £2:50! If you want to purchase a copy, they will be on a table outside the fire door to the foyer, with a box of (out of date) green envelopes. You can put the payment in an envelope and post it through the presbytery door.

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.

SPUC Pro-Life Chain. Sat. 25th April. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 regimen, this event has sadly had to be cancelled. The next meeting of SPUC has also been cancelled, and there will be no further meetings until the 'lock down' has been ended.

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.

Tots @St Gregory's: As with other meetings, Tots has been cancelled until further notice.

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=ebdssbdestsearc>

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.lentisolation.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 29th March 2020, 5th Sunday in Lent, Year A

For the Jews after 597 BC, exiled in Babylon without their king, land, Temple, all seemed lost as a nation. Ezekiel's encouraging messages gave them hope that the nation would rise and live again, like a field full of dry bones coming to life. But this will be the Lord's doing, for the sake of his name, which they have profaned by their idolatry.

In deep sorrow the psalm cries to the Lord, begging pardon for our sins, trusting in God's mercy and awaiting redemption in hope.

Writing to the Jewish Christians in Rome, Paul has been puzzling over our human condition: "I do not do the good that I want, but I do the evil that I hate". Mortal flesh is weak. "But God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" so that the Son's Spirit might give us the strength to live according to His Spirit. Paul's conclusion: with

Christ's Spirit in us we are given life reconciled with God both now and in bodily resurrection after death.

These foretastes of resurrection prepare us for John's description of the raising of Lazarus, the third of the three beautiful Lenten readings from John. Perhaps we should ponder how difficult it is to believe, and how difficult it was for Martha to open the tomb?

Psalm Response:

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

(Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 129(130); Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 51: Living Sustainably with creation: Make the first input for the day Read Romans 8: 35-39; for 3 days in honour of the Trinity..

Tip No. 52: Living Sustainably with creation: Collect the initial cold water, which runs into the washing up bowl before washing dishes, in a container ready to water your plants!

Actions to LiveSimply : Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatApp, Messenger or Skype.

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 CAFOD

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has now spread to every continent except Antarctica, with confirmed cases in several African and Asian countries where CAFOD works.

CAFOD's Director Christine Allen said:

"We are extremely concerned about the impact the coronavirus could have in developing countries with fragile health systems, because it will be the vulnerable and marginalised in communities who will pay the highest price.

"If this virus hits refugee camps, like the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar or camps for Syrian refugees inside and outside of the country, it could be catastrophic for the millions of people already struggling to access healthcare.

"We know from our experiences of fighting Ebola in West Africa that shattering myths by delivering clear and accurate information via trusted faith and traditional leaders, and promoting good hygiene practices, are both key to keeping people safe. We hold all peoples affected by this virus in our prayers, especially those in countries with weaker healthcare systems."

CAFOD are offering a virtual Children's Liturgy on line, to join you need to register at:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4718232399489083405>

The CAFOD Lent collection continues; please keep your offerings for the time being, but donations in a clearly marked envelope may be put through the presbytery door.

The Hope Centre still needs support

It is now not possible to leave food donations for the Hope Centre at church, but cash donations can be made directly through: www.justgiving.com/campaign/helphope . Please be generous.



During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The Easter "Bible Alive" is available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.

