



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

The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

When the Mass for this feast is celebrated in daylight the impact of a candlelight procession is lost. Last Sunday there was a theme of light in the readings: the prophesy of Isaiah about those who walked in darkness having seen a great light — on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone (*Isaiah 9:2*). The Gospel makes it clear that Jesus is the light — indeed he make this quite explicit (*John 8:12*).

When there is a Candlemass procession, the liturgical text explains the ceremony:

“Today is the blessed day when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Outwardly he was fulfilling the Law, but in reality he was coming to meet his believing people. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the Temple. Enlightened by the same Spirit, the recognized the Lord and confessed him with exultation.”

Simeon responded with the words of one of the great Gospel Canticles which we hear read today:

“Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace,
just as you promised;

because my eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared for all the nations to see,
a light to enlighten the pagans
and the glory of your people Israel.”

(*Luke 2:29-32*)

Simeon recognized the baby Jesus as the true light (*see John 1:9*) who has come into this world.

It seems appropriate that this feast comes at a dark time of the year. In January we are still living in the joy of the Christmas celebration, but by February we are looking forward to longer days and warmer times, and yet still living too much in darkness.

However there is another darkness in our world, and on the Sunday following the liberation of Auschwitz, the rise of not just anti-Semitism, but also of what is called ‘Islamophobia’ and other forms of racism cast a dark shadow over our society must give us cause for concern. In this and so many other ways we live in a society in which the popular mood is out of tune with teachings of Christ. We must be beacons of light in that darkness.



The Bishops have asked that we celebrate 2020 as the **Year of the Word**, with the beautiful title of **The God Who Speaks**. As part of our diocesan celebrations we are organising a Scripture Festival Day for families, catechists, readers, people who know a lot about the Bible, and people who don’t know anything at all, but wish they did!

With fantastic speakers, **CJM music**, **Rise Theatre**, a multitude of **workshops**, youth and children’s streams, the **National Scripture Tour** and a **sky dancing St Jerome**, book your place now and join us for a proper diocesan festival day. (10.00 am to 4.30 pm)

We have special provision for children and young people which we want to be every bit as good as what’s going on for the adults. They are going to have the best time! Rise Theatre and the CAFOD Schools Team will be going into the streams. We will also have the fabulous John Hardwick, Christian puppeteer for the children’s stream.

Workshops booked so far include:

-  Bible Timeline
-  The Bible in the Mass –
-  Godly play –
-  Scripture and art –
-  Choosing Music for the Mass –
-  Catholic Social Teaching in the Bible
-  Lectio Divina prayer
-  Connecting to Jewish Scriptures
-  Sharing the Bible with the next generation

Admission include tea, coffee and a sandwich lunch.

It is hoped that the dinner on Shrove Tuesday will enable us to pay for tickets for the parish, or at least, to heavily subsidise them. Tickets for the dinner are now available. See inside for more details.

Please book this date in your diary!

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*



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

Bible Alive for February & 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.**

The Big Sleep Out 2020: Siobhan O'Donovan has once again taken part in the Big Sleep Out for the Hope Centre. This year it took place in the Saints Rugby Club Grounds on Friday 31st January. **She will collect the sponsorship monies after both Masses today!** Thank you for your support.

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.**

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>

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.

Palestinian Students in Northampton: Mon. 3rd Feb. Public Meeting. Northampton Quaker Meeting House (Wellington Street, NN1 3AS), 7pm. Students from Al Quds (Jerusalem) University - studying Medicine. Come along and hear them, time for questions and discussion. All welcome - Free admission

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 is 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 are always welcome especially if they sing and are good at hill-walking (steps to the choir gallery are steep). *Alec*

CAFOD Supporters' Event: Come and hear from CAFOD's Director, Christine Allen, about her experience visiting our partners & giving input at global events; be inspired by other supporters & have an energising session. Sat 22 Feb - St Augustine Church, Langcliffe Drive, Heelands, MK13 7PL 10:30-1.30pm (coffee/tea from 10am with shared lunch from 1:30pm). Please let us know you are coming on 01494863777 or northampton@cafod.org.uk.

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.

Fundraising Dinner for the Year of the Word Festival

(Wordfest): The Bible Timeline Team are raising funds in order to pay for people from the local area to attend the Year of the Word Diocesan Scripture Festival, Sat. 6th June. There will be a sumptuous fundraising dinner (Shrove) Tuesday 25th Feb. 7.30pm in the hall here at St Gregory's. There are a limited number of tickets available, which are for a suggested donation of £12.50 each. To reserve a ticket please contact Catherine Mulligan on mulligancatherine@hotmail.co.uk or Alex Heath on 07963032175 or heath@nores.org.uk asap.

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.

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 February 12th.** All welcome.

Faith group leader weekend - 14 to 16 February, Kings Park Centre, Northampton. I hope that leaders in the parishes will take advantage of this opportunity for training and formation. It is suitable for anyone leading RCIA, Lent or Advent Groups, Bible Timeline etc. The weekend will cover small group skills, leading prayer, forming a group and tricky situations. Places are limited so booking essential. <http://formationpathways.co.uk/events/>.

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 28th March at Sacred Heart Church Hall, from 2.00 pm until 4.30 pm. . It is also essential that children attend Mass each week. Today they are given the "Our Father".

Confirmation - 2nd Preparation Session: Saturday 8th February at Sacred Heart Church hall from 3pm-6.30pm. Please note all parents must attend the briefing at 3pm.

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children- coffee

morning last Saturday: Thank you to everyone who supported the 'Tiny Feet' coffee morning last Saturday. As a result of your generous support we have raised £166.10 which will be sent to SPUC headquarters to assist in the fight to protect the unborn. The fight to protect life from conception to natural death is a constant one and we must never drop our guard. At the moment there are just four members of the SPUC group in Northampton and we desperately need more people to join us. If you would like to become involved in this important work then please contact William Currie at wpcurie@btinternet.com

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.

Scripture Readings 2nd February 2020, Presentation of the Lord, Year A

The Book of Malachi was written after the return from exile and the rebuilding of the Temple in 515 BC, and perhaps prompted the reforms by Ezra from 460 BC. Jewish practices had become lax, with easy divorce and intermarriage with pagans. Malachi heavily criticised this fall from covenant standards, and promises the Lord will come in judgement to punish the evildoers. A messenger will come first to prepare the way, then seen as Elijah, but interpreted by Christians as John the Baptist.

These psalm verses were sung as the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Temple. The lintels of the gates were seen as too low for the great God to enter.

The Letter to the Hebrews seeks to strengthen wavering faith. Christ shared fully in our humanity, including death, and was completely

faithful to God. Now risen and exalted through his suffering, he is a high priest, the perfect mediator. Having been tempted frequently to give up his mission, Jesus is able to help Christians who are tempted to give up their faith.

Luke's gospel describes the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Mary and Joseph were devout Jews, faithfully observing the Law. Including the requirement for every first-born son to be consecrated to the Lord, just as Samuel had been.

Psalm Response: **Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord.**
(Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 23(24); Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Actions to Live Simply :

Tip No. 37: *Living Sustainably with creation:* avoid leaving your engine idling when parked or stationary putting Co2 in to the atmosphere.

Tip No. 38: *Solidarity with the poor:* Avoid buying goods made by exploited workers. Sold by Nike, H&M, Primark, Walmart(Asda) (according to Sheffield University.)

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

Saints this week

This week all the saints we are celebrating suffered in some significant way; Blaise, Agatha, Paul Miki and his companions were all martyrs. Josephine Bakhita is a relatively new addition to the calendar, having been canonised in the year 2000. Saint Josephine Margaret Bakhita was born around 1869 in the village of Olgossa in the Darfur region of Sudan. She was a member of the Daju people and her uncle was a tribal chief. Due to her family lineage, she grew up happy and relatively prosperous, saying that as a child, she did not know suffering. Sometime in February 1877, Josephine was kidnapped by Arab slave traders. She was forced to walk barefoot over 600 miles to a slave market in El Obeid. She was bought and sold at least twice during the grueling journey, and for the next 12 years she would be bought, sold and given away over a dozen times. She spent so much time in captivity that she forgot her original name.

In 1883, the Turkish general sold her to the Italian Vice Consul, Callisto Legani. He was a much kinder master and he did not beat her. When it was time for him to return to Italy, she begged to be taken with him, and he agreed. After a long and dangerous journey across Sudan, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean, they arrived in Italy. Eventually she was placed in the custody of the Canossian Sisters in Venice.

For the first time in her life, Josephine was free and could choose what to do with her life. She chose to remain with the Canossian

Sisters. She was baptized on January 9, 1890 and took the name Josephine Margaret and Fortunata. (Fortunata is the Latin translation for her Arabic name, Bakhita).

For the next 42 years of her life, she worked as a cook and a doorkeeper at the convent. She was known for her gentle voice and smile. She was gentle and charismatic, and was often referred to lovingly as the "little brown sister" or honourably as the "black mother."

When speaking of her enslavement, she often professed she would thank her kidnappers. For had she not been kidnapped, she might never have come to know Jesus Christ and entered His Church.

During World War II, the people of the village regarded her as their protector, and although bombs fell on their village, not one citizen died.

In her later years, she began to suffer physical pain and was forced to use a wheelchair. But she always remained cheerful. If anyone asked her how she was, she would reply, "As the master desires."

On the evening of February 8, 1947, Josephine spoke her last words, "Our Lady, Our Lady!" She then died.

She is the patroness of Sudan, which is where St Daniel Comboni was archbishop at the time of her birth. Next week we have an appeal on behalf of the Comboni Missions..

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

Following the Pastoral Area Reflection Day held in Wellingborough on 6th July 2019, a new Pastoral Area Council has been formed and is beginning to develop the working groups to address the discussions we had on the Reflection Day. Unfortunately, the attendance list of that day has been mislaid and many of those attending expressed an interest in being part of the working groups or supporting this initiative in some way or another. If you are one of these people please could you contact Kim Marks and provide your contact details, name of your parish and your area of interest? Kim can be contacted by email marksymail@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 01933 400728 (leave your details on answerphone).