



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

Holy Week @ Home

This will be the oddest Holy Week that any of us can remember, or will ever, please God, ever have to experience again.

There are verses in a psalm which may be helpful; it is one of the pilgrimage psalms which would have been recited by those on their way to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem:

Blessed the people whose strength is in you,
whose heart is set on pilgrim ways.
As they go through the Baca Valley,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rain covers it with pools.
They walk with ever-growing strength;
the God of gods will appear in Sion.
O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;
look on the face of your anointed.

Psalm 84, verses 6 – 10

The Baca Valley is also known as the Valley of Hinnom, which in Jesus' time was known as “Gehenna”; it was the last part of the journey to Jerusalem. In another translation, that verse is:

Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well:
and the pools are filled with water.

We are on pilgrimage to our Christian Passover, and drawing near to Jerusalem. Indeed, the Palm Sunday liturgy begins on the Mount of Olives as we prepare to enter Jerusalem waving our palm branches and shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David”.

This year, it will seem more like the Baca Valley, or the vale of misery. However, the psalm encourages us to “use it for a well” or “make it a place of springs”. In other words, rather than weep over what cannot happen this year, we must seek those blessings there are in this different way of celebrating Holy Week.

Many years ago Fr Raniero Cantalamessa wrote a book which has been produced as a video entitled “Drink from the Wells of the Church”; this is well worth a watch (<https://vimeo.com/41839452>) and would enhance our Holy Week. There is also a website called “Holy Week @ Home” (<https://holyyweek.pastoral.center/>) with downloads for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day. (Recommended – the parish has a subscription.)

Sunday is Palm Sunday, the day of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Mass will be available on the parish website (www.stgregory.org.uk/videos/) and on the parish Facebook page (www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton/). This will simply be

the Mass of the day, but there will be prayers over the palm branches. Please note, the prayer is asking God to give a blessing on the people who “hold high these branches to hail Christ in his triumph” that they “may bear fruit for you by good works accomplished in him”.

There is a warning: “The important thing is participation at the procession and not only the obtaining of palm or olive branches. Palms or olive branches should **not** be kept as amulets, or for therapeutic or magical reasons to dispel evil spirits or to prevent the damage these causes in the fields or in the homes, all of which can assume a certain superstitious guise. **Palms and olive branches are kept in the home as a witness to faith in Jesus Christ, the messianic king, and in his Paschal Victory.**”

Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy

Palm branches, with the blessing on those who carry them will be outside the fire door in the presbytery garden, but please only come if you can do so while complying with the government's regulations, and please maintain social distancing.

There will be no Mass of Christ on Maundy Thursday this year; Bishop David will bless the Holy Oils when we can gather together again.

The main Masses of the Triduum (The Three Holy Days) will be live-streamed from the Cathedral. On Maundy Thursday the Mass of the Lord's Supper will be at 7.00 pm.

In the materials provided by Holy Week @ Home there is a simple prayer service for use with a family meal on Maundy Thursday evening. This might fit well before watching the Mass from the Cathedral. If you are able to watch with Jesus into the evening, a good basis for prayer is to read St John's account of the evening (John 13:1 – 17:26).

The Good Friday Liturgy is at 3.00 pm, again, live-streamed from the Cathedral, and the parish website and Facebook will have picture of the relic of the True Cross. (You are not expected to kiss your screen!)

The Easter Vigil will be streamed from the Cathedral at 8.00 pm on Holy Saturday evening.

Although Liturgies will be celebrated at St Gregory's, they will not be recorded or made available on the website or Facebook; this is a chance to take part with the entire Diocese. It would be good if we could all celebrate the unity of the Diocese.

The Easter Day Mass will be transmitted from St Gregory's.

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/donate/>

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*

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.

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 during the daytime, 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 see the separate notice about the Hope Centre.

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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: myf@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

Fr Nicholas King leads Stations of the Cross
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/3785948>

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

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

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

Cardinal Nichols leads Stations of the Cross
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_16s7Nt_P2E

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 5th April 2020, Palm/Passion Sunday Year A

In exile in Babylon, after Jerusalem was destroyed in 597 BC, the despairing people are tempted to give up their faith in God. In the 'servant-song' Isaiah offers consolation, recommending trust in the Lord.

Today Isaiah's words express both our horror at the way Our Lord was treated, and our admiration for his example of patient non-retaliation. Trusting confidently in his Father, he "sets his face like flint", even though it is covered with spittle.

On the Cross Jesus uttered the first words of this psalm which reflects his suffering. Not a cry of despair, but expressing Jesus' complete confidence in his Father and praising the redemption bought by his Cross.

The hymn in Philipians rejoices: unlike Adam, Jesus did not seek to be equal to God. But God raised him to glory and gave him the name

'Lord'. Jesus on the Cross invites us to imitate his humility.

Matthew's Passion, with its lively dialogue, shows Jesus aware and in control. Writing after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Matthew blamed the Jewish leaders for Jesus' death. Jesus died just before Passover, when Jews celebrated their freedom from slavery. Soldiers, Jewish leaders, the inscription on the Cross, all ironically give Jesus his true title of 'King of the Jews', the Messiah. Jesus' obedience to God's plan gives the Cross meaning.

Psalm Response: **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

(Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21(22); Philipians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14 – 27:66)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 53: Living Sustainably with creation: well done for practicing living simply: less rushing about putting CO₂ into the atmosphere and more time for baking, family communication / meals, praying and appreciating nature in the garden.

Tip No. 54: Solidarity with the poor: try a three day meal rotation; meat, fish and vegetarian or reducing to two meals a day, for those in the world who have no choice.

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

The Hope Centre still needs support

The ongoing situation with Covid-19 presents significant challenges for those living in poverty across Northampton and we at The Northampton Hope Centre are doing everything within our power to continue supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

From Sunday 30th March, all of Northampton's homeless community have been offered hotel accommodation which was secured in partnership with Northampton Borough Council. We are now working together to support these individuals allowing them to self-isolate in a safe and secure environment.

Hope is providing 3 meals a day and also providing support in the form of clothing, supplying activities and also a mental health support help line.

The Hope Food Club is now operating on a delivery only basis and has doubled its capacity and is now delivering 3 days each week.

Hope will continue to rely on the support of the community to ensure that we have the resources to care for those in need and would encourage anyone wanting to help to stay up-to-date via social media as we appeal for specific items.

We have been overwhelmed by the support offered by the Northamptonshire community and would like to thank everyone for their contribution to keeping our services operational.

Hope is working closely with the Northampton County Council resilience cell to help co-ordinate emergency food provision for those on low incomes in partnership with other foodbanks, sharing food, drivers, vans and storage, and sourcing as much food as possible to feed financially vulnerable people

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.

