



# The Catholic Parish of Saint Gregory the Great Northampton



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON, REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 234091



**“A truly thriving Catholic community, confidently and humbly proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.”**



## The Hope Centre in COVID time

Every charity has been hit by the pandemic; the Hope Centre is no exception. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Robin Burgess explained in a briefing last September:

“Covid 19 has had a dramatic impact on Hope, just like everyone else. It has created financial and logistical challenges that continue to work through: if we see a return to possible greater lockdown restrictions, no-one knows how powerful these could be.”

“At the start of this crisis, we did not know if we would survive: our whole fundraising model, where the majority of funds came from local community fundraising, was wrecked by covid and we have had to cancel our entire year of events. At the same time we were unable to open our day centre in the same way, and are unlikely to be able to do so for the rest of the year, if not beyond. In terms of food poverty, demand escalated threefold, and we had to work really hard to gather food and funds to support that. For a period, that was the primary focus of Hope, and we rose to meet that challenge – work we are very proud of. With community and then later government support, we gathered the funds, the food, the volunteers and the alliances of other food banks to work together collectively for the good of our community.

Homelessness changed completely, with rough sleepers being housed in hotels and then onto supported tenancies. At a stroke, we had no access to our own clients. We could not see what services we could provide. Our whole business model – our charitable model – for that client group was thrown into doubt.

The impact was equally great on our catering and tools businesses: these simply could not operate – and the catering still cannot.”

In response to this, a new structure has been created in order to do everything that lies within their power to continue supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

Hope has adapted and increased its services for people in need:

- The day service for street homeless people, ‘Hand-up’, for rough sleepers and sofa surfers, is open 6 days a week, giving food, advice, information, benefits, access to bank accounts, clothes and more.
- They now offer supported housing
- The support for people to get training and employability, address mental health, addictions, open to anyone, including but not just for the homeless, ‘Learning 4 living’ is expanding and we welcome referrals
- The various social enterprises offer training, work experience and employability skills for anyone in need
- The foodclub offers vital food, plus an access point for the Learning 4 Living service, to anyone in poverty

Hope will continue to rely on the support of the community to ensure that they 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 they appeal for specific items.

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

Hope works 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. They are extremely grateful for our continuing support.

## Our Crib collection — over £500 so far.

Each year our crib collection is given to the Hope Centre, as we remember the homelessness of the Holy Family when Our Lord was born. Each year the generosity of the parish is magnificent. Today is the last day of Christmastide this year, and as well as at the crib itself, there is a special collection at the door for the Hope Centre. The Epiphany Crib is quite different from that at Christmas, as shown in the Gospel for the feast of the Epiphany (*Matthew 2:1-12*). The context of this is stark. The Magi have unwittingly alerted Herod to the birth of someone whom he supposes to be a rival to his throne. This was entirely within his character; he had already had three of his sons executed lest they become rivals.



As a consequence of this, the Holy Family were to become not only homeless but also refugees, undocumented immigrants in Egypt. This story is told in Matthew, chapter 2, verses 13 to 18, with the return from Egypt in verses 19 to 23.

In our Crib depiction of the adoration of the Magi, the figures of Our Lady and the child Jesus are from the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham. Since our statue was made, new research has suggested that the original statue was remarkably similar, as it is now thought that the ‘Langham Madonna’ in the V&A is in fact it!



# Notices of Interest

**LUX.VALOUR Weekend:** On Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st January 2021, we can all come together online for LUX.Valour! During our LUX.Valour weekend, we will be exploring what it means to be a young person of great bravery. How we can walk into the unknown of this New Year, confident that we are “not given a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power.” 2 Timothy 1:7.  
<https://nymo.org/lux-valour/>

**Repository:** Despite the difficulties this year we have managed to donate some funds to our charities, the Hope Centre and our own Parish help for those in need. The amounts have had to be reduced, but perhaps conditions will improve in 2021. Once again a great vote of thanks to our customers and especially to the small but loyal band of helpers. Anyone wishes to volunteer help after services when normality returns would be very welcome. At the moment, goods can be looked at with the help of the stewards as before. *Kathleen Healey*

**SPUC - Prayer Group: Help us save the lives of unborn children:** SPUC Northampton is actively looking for people to join the local branch. We meet every few weeks in order to plan & arrange pro-life initiatives. This is a personal invitation for you to join us. We promise that there will be no pressure to do anything you are not comfortable with. If you are unable to join the branch how would you feel about being part of our prayer team? We are looking for people to form a prayer team who will support us through prayer on an ongoing basis & on special occasions. All we ask is that you spend some time in prayer in support of our pro-life work. This can be done in the comfort of your own home or with others in the group. If you would like to join the branch or join the prayer group please contact William on 07393965643 (text is fine) or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com). Prayer is a very powerful weapon in the fight to save our unborn children and we beseech Our Lady of Guadalupe to intercede for us in this battle.

**COVID-19 Precautions** In this lockdown, please keep safe. We seek in the church to have a ‘covid-secure’ environment; please help us to fulfil this.

**Face masks:** Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

**Bible Alive** for January is now available. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church.

**St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.** If you have a child due to start primary school in September 2021, St Gregory's are welcoming parents to visit the school and see it in action. Contact 01604 403511 to arrange a visit. Closing date for place applications is 15th January 2021 at 5pm.

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

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

**Second Collections 2021:** Please see the poster in the porch for next year's second collections.

**Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church:** The webinar series has been wonderful, and thank you to all who promoted it and came along throughout the series. We have had over 3,000 views! This is definitely something we will be looking to do again in the future. If you want to catch up with any you missed, all the videos are here: <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>

**Test and Trace:** The government have now released their app to support track & trace & we have a QR code which can be scanned to record your presence at church. This is not obligatory, but should help in the important task of controlling the spread of the virus. As responsible members of society, we should comply with this request.

**Financial Support for Self-Isolation:** Please see the following article regarding financial help available for those who are self-isolating:  
<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/health/coronavirus/how-apply-self-isolation-financial-support-now-available-across-northamptonshire-3004756>

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, at 7pm in the Sacristy.

**Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend to book your place.**

**First Holy Communion 2021:** If you have a child who wishes to make their 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at [swatts49@outlook.com](mailto:swatts49@outlook.com), who will note your name & the name & age of your child. This is still very much a first step as we are still unsure of how we can prepare the children at the moment; please be patient &, as soon as we possibly can, we'll give you more info about our programme & timings at which stage you can decide whether or not you wish to proceed.

**Confirmation:** Yet again we are thrown into confusion! We await more information. This continues to be difficult!

**Parish Finances:** As colder weather is here & have the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent through the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous.

**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)**

## GREGORY CARE

Thank you so much for your generosity over the last year. Through your continued financial contributions we were able to support children in our Catholic schools by providing travel passes, Christmas gifts, uniform items and many food parcels during the previous lockdown. We continue to provide support to families struggling with utility bills etc. in our parish.

At this present time the Cathedral are doing a fantastic job of supplying food parcels to those in need including people of this parish. Following discussion with the Cathedral it was agreed that

Gregory Care would help by supplying toiletries and hygiene products to be added to the food parcels.

Therefore we are appealing for donations of the following items:- Soap, shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, nappies, baby food, sanitary products, washing up liquid, and washing powder etc. If you can help please place items in the box at the back of church which will be delivered to the Cathedral weekly.

Once again thank you for your support.

# Scripture Readings 10th January 2021, Baptism of the Lord, Year B

Isaiah reminds the exiled Israelites God has not forgotten his everlasting covenant. They are invited to return to him, looking forward to the heavenly banquet in the end days. But they must "listen, and your soul will live". In every Mass we are "called to the supper of the Lamb". Isaiah urges: "seek the Lord while he may be found": hidden and unimaginably different from us, yet he is "still near" and "rich in forgiving".

The psalm, also by Isaiah, expresses our thanks to the Lord, who has saved us in spite of his anger. We exultantly praise God in return.

John briefly summarises the basis of our faith, namely that the man Jesus is Son of God, God's Christ. Both the water at his baptism, and the water and blood pouring from his side on the Cross, witness to Jesus' humanity. Just as Baptism and the Eucharist witness to our faith, which demands that we love God as we love his son. Loving

God is an act of will, not emotion: it means keeping his commandments.

Unlike the other three gospels Mark has no prologue: after quoting Isaiah he starts immediately with John the Baptist proclaiming the coming of the Lord. God was revealed to the Jews during the Exodus and in their return from exile. Now God reveals himself to the whole world through his Christ. Jesus is confirmed as God's Son by the Father and by the Spirit.

Psalm Response:

**With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.**

(Isaiah 55:1-11; 1 John 5:1-9; Mark 1 : 7-11)

*Chris Oliver*

## Walking towards Eternity

Starting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January at 3.00 pm and at 7.30 pm there will be a series of Zoom sessions on aspects of living the Christian life. The first is on hearing the voice of God. One way in which God speaks to us today is through our reading of the Scriptures. Last year had been designated as a "Year of the Word", and thanks to COVID-19 this has been extended into this year. Through Bible study we can learn much about the Scriptures, but only when we read prayerfully can we truly hear God speaking to us through the words of the Bible.

There has been a request to make this available in an evening, so it will be repeated at 7.30 pm on Monday evenings. Both Zoom links will be

on the email with the newsletter for those who receive it in that way; for those who read the print copy or on the website, please email to Fr Andrew ([priest@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:priest@stgregory.org.uk)) for the link, saying which time you want (3.00 pm or 7.30 pm) and you will be sent the link in time for the session.

If you have never used Zoom before, please give it a go! It is a good way of getting human companionship in these difficult times, and the session will help you spiritually.

## More about "Walking towards Eternity"

There are eight sessions each of which deal with practical aspects of the Christian life. There is an overall purpose which is summed up in words from St Paul:

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

*(Romans 12:2)*

In the first session the theme is hearing the voice of God. This invites us to renew our prayerful reading of the Scriptures, not so much in traditional Bible Study as in seeking to hear what God is saying to us as we read the Scriptures. We open ourselves to hear God speaking to us. This is sometimes given the rather grand name of 'Lectio Divina', but what it consists in is prayerful reading of God's Word.

It is this that underpins the following sessions. In the second we consider the New Commandment that Jesus gives us — to love one another. We will be considering the infinite love of God, and how this is different from other ways in which we use the word 'love'.

The third session examines forgiveness, both our need to be forgiven and our need to forgive others. This is central to the pray that Jesus taught us: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"

In the fourth session the theme is humility. We look at the humility of Jesus himself, and learn how we can better put this into effect in our own lives.

Having already considered how to read the scriptures in a prayerful way, we come back to the subject of prayer, trying to grow in our life of prayer. There are many different forms of prayer, and we might

discover new ways which help us.

In the sixth session the theme is faithfulness. Like all these other qualities, faithfulness is fully found in God, and in Jesus. We desire to be faithful to him, and in this session we will learn more about how to achieve this.

The seventh session is entitled "Walking in Sacrifice". Sacrifice is a hall-mark of the worship of the Old Testament, and the Jewish sacrifices are all completed in the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. We are able to participate in this through the celebration of Mass — the "Holy Sacrifice"; but how does this play out in our day-to-day life?

We have become used to the word 'Eucharist' and that word literally means 'thanksgiving'. This is the theme of our final session, and it not last because it is least important! St Paul frequently tells his readers to be thankful; for example:

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. <sup>6</sup>Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

There is a book to accompany this course, but it is hard to come by. However, all the materials will be made available to everyone who joins the course. There is no cost except that if you are able to find the book on-line (ISBN-13 : 978-1935940180), it will be helpful. At the time of writing this, there are a few copies on Amazon.

## Next Sunday

There will be the special collection for the Life House in our parish, and it is also designated as 'Peace Sunday', which is why 'World Peace' is one of the prayer themes for this season. These are not two totally distinct concepts. If we are to be genuinely 'Pro-life', we must be consistent. Warfare is as much an abuse of God's gift of life as

abortion is, and the spending of money on the means of war while people starve to death is equally a violation of life. Sadly, except at election-times we can do little about war-mongering politicians, but we can support our own Life House.

**The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)**, of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish.

## **SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021**

<b>10<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Hope Centre</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Life House</b>
<b>31<sup>st</sup> January</b>	<b>Home Missions</b>
<b>28<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26<sup>th</sup> Feb)</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>	<b>Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Diocesan Priests' Training Fund</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Mass Media</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Day for Life</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Peter's Pence</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>Apostleship of the Sea</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>Home Mission Sunday</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> October</b>	<b>CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1<sup>st</sup> October)</b>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Mission Sunday</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Bishop's Maintenance Fund</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Sick &amp; Retired Priests' Fund</b>

