



# 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

# Forgive us our Trespasses

All across the London Underground are small, ceramic finger labyrinths for commuters to trace (though few do). Created by the artist Mark Wallinger, each station features a panel, each in a public space – when new stations were added to the system, so new labyrinths are installed.

These ceramics are a nod to a venerable spiritual practice. You may be familiar with one of the most famous labyrinths on the floor of Chartres Cathedral, which invites pilgrims to reflect on their life as a series of steps both away from and towards the LORD.

Hundreds of thousands of people walk past the Wallinger ceramics without so much of a glance, all the while their own lives tracing familiar patterns, sometimes progressing, sometimes regressing in love, in faith, in life. Each one of these labyrinths is unique, in design and in the path one traces; just as each life that passes them by is unique.

Similarly, when growing up, you may have had the joy of playing Snakes and Ladders. Again, here, you trace your way *up* the board, towards your goal. Sometimes you gain a remarkable advance (perhaps akin to a spiritual insight or a singularly graced moment), sometimes you get thrown back (as one is when succumbing to temptation and sin). The Scriptural images here - Jacob's Ladder (*cf. Genesis 28:12*) and the Snake in Eden (*cf. Genesis 3:15*) - are perhaps unintentional but worthy of note and reflection.

Conversion, both initial conversion to Jesus Christ and ongoing conversion of heart, intellect and will, are recurring invitations in the Bible and the Liturgy.

The beginning of Mark's Gospel offers us a perspective on preparing the way of the Lord. Mark tells us that John the Baptist proclaimed a



'baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.' Believe it or not, John and his message of conversion were immensely popular! Great joy doesn't sound exactly like the emotion brought forth by a call to 'repentance' and acknowledgement of sin. So, what is happening here?

John's call to 'repentance' wasn't an invitation to penance. He was inviting people to see everything in life from a new perspective. The change in perspective is required for our participation in the great mission of Christ's Church – the building of the kingdom and the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Our Baptism opens the door to this new perspective, it opens the door to sacramental graces in the other sacraments and permits us to see

God as a loving Father and Jesus as brother and Lord.

Where we go awry, sliding down one of life's 'snakes' or tracing a path away from the centre of the labyrinth – the Sacrament of Reconciliation awaits. The Father's arms are open; let us climb the ladders of grace.

The picture, reproduced from the 'The Return of the Prodigal' by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617 – 1682) is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. The picture was originally painted for the Hospital of Charity in Seville 1667-1670.

Describe what you can see, what is happening?

What does this picture say about forgiveness?

In Reconciliation, you are reconciled with God and with others. How have you experienced the mercy of the Lord in the past or even today?

## The Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter

It is a precept of the Church that all Catholics should seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) at least once a year — this is normally understood as being at Easter, as part of the 'Easter Duties'; to receive Holy Communion in a 'state of grace' in Eastertide.

The normal programme in Northampton is that there is a Penitential Liturgy on the Cathedral on the evening of the Monday of Holy Week, and at St Gregory's on the Tuesday; both starting at 7.00 pm.

This makes a good preparation for the experience of the Triduum (the Three Holy Days) of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday) leading to the great celebration of the Resurrection.



22 Park Avenue North  
Northampton. NN3 2HS  
Website: [www.stgregory.org.uk](http://www.stgregory.org.uk)

10<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
Parish Mass Book - Year B  
Page 83

**Priest:**  
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**Deacon:**  
Rev Michael Fleming ☎ 647750  
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**Safeguarding representative**  
Carol McNeil ☎ 07906802615

.Sunday <i>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Of Lent</i>	9.00 am 11.00 am 5.00 pm	Mass Mass Mass (Syro Malabar Rite)	Andrew Conduah The Parish
Monday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	The Job Family
Tuesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	The Abraham Family
Wednesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Anne Cawley RIP
Thursday Feria	9-11 am 7.00 pm	Holy Hours of Adoration Mass	Maggie Caraher RIP
Friday Feria	9.00 am 9.40-12 noon 7.30 pm	Mass Adoration Stations of the Cross ( <i>St. Gregory's</i> )	Charles, Sarah, Sven & Lloyd for Healing
Saturday Feria	9.00 am 9.45 am	Mass Confessions	Thanksgiving
Sunday <i>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Of Lent</i>	9.00 am 11.00 am 2.30 pm 5.00 pm	Mass Mass Stations of the Cross Mass (Syro-Malabar Rite)	The Parish Alec & The Choir

- Your Offering to the Parish:** Last Sunday's collection was £1331.04. Thank you!  
**Standing Order gifts to the Parish:** Each week £580 is given through standing orders.  
**Donations through the Diocese:** An average of £90 is given each week.  
**Gift Aid benefits to the parish:** The value of Gift Aid averages £136 per week.  
**Second Collection Last Week:** CAFOD. Ongoing.  
**Cleaners This Week:** The Church is cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis.  
**Counters this Week:** CC & CP

**Readings for this Sunday**— *see inside for details*

- 2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23:** *The wrath and mercy of God are revealed.*  
**Ephesians 2: 4-10:** *You who were dead through your sins have been saved through grace.*  
**John 3: 14-21:** *God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved.*

**Readings for next Sunday**

Jeremiah 31: 31-34; Hebrews 5: 7-9; John 12: 20-30. (Page 86)

- During This Season of Lent, We are Asked to Pray For:**  
Candidates for the Sacraments; Penitents & Wanderers;  
Women's World Day of Prayer; Survivors of Sexual Abuse;  
The Needy & Hungry of the World.

**Mothering Sunday**

Mothering Sunday should not be confused with 'Mother's Day', although this is a confusion that is now firmly embedded in British culture. It is clearly good and right that our human and biological mothers should be honoured; gifts to our mother or visits to their grave are clearly acts of virtue and to be commended. However, we should remember that this is not the whole meaning of this day, indeed not the original meaning of the day. The first meaning of the day is recognising that the 'Jerusalem above' is our mother (*see Galatians 4:26*) and from this we see that our new birth in the font of Baptism makes the church of our Baptism the place of our spiritual birth, and hence a representation of our heavenly mother and Mother Church. We also recognise our heavenly Mother in the person of Our Lady, given to us at the foot of the Cross in the person pf St John (*see John 19:27*). We have also come to have a new respect for 'Mother Earth', the soil that gives birth to the food that sustains our life, that sustains the forests that absorb our excess carbon production, and finally receives our bodies at the end of our mortal life. The rose colour of the vestments of today remind us of the earth in which roses grow and produce their beauty and fragrance, but also have a feminine connection which reminds us of our human mothers and in these days when we seek to confront and abolish misogyny and abuse of women, our human fellowship.

**Friday Stations of the Cross**

- 16<sup>th</sup> February St Gregory's    23<sup>rd</sup> February St Matthew's    1<sup>st</sup> March St Gregory's  
8<sup>th</sup> March St Matthew's    15<sup>th</sup> March St Gregory's    22<sup>nd</sup> March St Matthew's

**Please Pray for the Sick:**


**Anniversaries:**

May they Rest in Peace

John Walsh	Anne Van Zeller
Violet Jadelin	Edith McGarry
Margaret Bryant	Bertram King
Mary Tate	Margaret Osborne
Joseph Loveridge	Catherine Williams
Gwynne Woodford	Jack Bull
Gerald O'Rourke	Harold Marks
Theresa Costello	Patrick Parkes
Dmytro Wrylczko	Michael Royde-Smith
Mary Bosworth	Sydney Beech
Hugh Gallagher	Leonard Osbourne
Bernard Powell	Bridget Williams
Petula Lynch	Gwendolen Cox
Eileen Doran	Hugh McDonald
Betty Heyward-Jones	Keith Nicholas
Brigid Morris	James Donnelly
Mary Lethbridge	

**POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR MARCH:**

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

# Notices of Interest

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. There is a small display of St. Patrick's Day and Easter cards. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

**Bible Alive** for April is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church

**Easter Flowers:** Envelopes are available for donations for flowers on the table in the narthex. If you wish your flowers to be in memory of a particular person, please write their name on the envelope. This will appear in the Easter newsletter.

## Gregory Care

**Dates for your diary:-**

Table top sale Saturday 13th April.

Parish Picnic in the Park Sunday 23rd June

*More details to follow nearer the times.*

**Thomas Becket Reunion:** Thomas Becket class who took O levels in 1980 and were born between September 1963 and August 1964 are holding a reunion on 20th July at the Vocal club on Bailiff St to mark turning 60! Tickets are now available through Eventbrite at a cost of £10.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April at 7pm in the Sacristy. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

**First Holy Communion 2023/4:** All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

**Confirmation in 2024:** There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to [childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk) for further information.

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (next – **Wed. 27<sup>th</sup> Mar in time for Easter!**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

**Pro Life Chain - Saturday 27th April 2024:** Saturday 27th April, between 11am & 1pm, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. If you can join us or want more information, then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com)

**Bishop David** is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at [debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org)

**Choir Notes:** Practices for Holy Week are Saturday mornings in Lent from 11-12:30 on Mar 16, 23. The next will be 4 May. . Alec

**Missio:** Thanks to those who picked up their Spring magazines. Others will soon have theirs delivered if not received already. The red box in the church entrance contains magazines for those difficult to contact & spare copies. Anyone who wants to join this work to support the Foreign Missions will find information on how the Red Box system works in a brown envelope marked "new" or speak to Dorothy (9am) or Alec (11am)

**Diocesan Pilgrimages:** There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St Gregory's on June 8<sup>th</sup>, and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August. Bookings for either or both will be available soon.

**Wool for Stella Maris Woolly Hats** If you have any spare knitting wool for hats, please drop it off at the church for our knitters. Aran will make the cosiest hat! Seafarers and mariners love bright colours as well as the more traditional dark colour palette. But please do avoid pastels as delicate colours get dirty quite quickly. If you would like more information or care to get involved, scan the QR code. Thank you, Bob



**Readers' Rotas:** The rotas for Readers and Eucharistic Ministers have been issued for the March to May period. Hard copies are available in the sacristy for those who want them

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

**Fire Safety:** Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe

## Next Alpha will be after Easter:

<b>First session:</b>	<b>April 16<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Is there more to life than this?
<b>Second Session:</b>	<b>April 23<sup>rd</sup>:</b>	Who is Jesus?
<b>Third Session:</b>	<b>April 30<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Why did Jesus die?
<b>Fourth Session:</b>	<b>May 7<sup>th</sup>:</b>	How can I have faith?
<b>Fifth Session:</b>	<b>May 14<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Why and how do I pray?
<b>Sixth Session:</b>	<b>May 21<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Why and how should I read the Bible?
<b>Seventh Session:</b>	<b>June 4<sup>th</sup>:</b>	How does God guide us?
<b>Away-Day:</b>	<b>June 8<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Who is the Holy Spirit?
<b>Eighth Session:</b>	<b>June 11<sup>th</sup>:</b>	How can I resist evil?
<b>Ninth Session:</b>	<b>June 18<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Why and how should I tell others?
<b>Tenth Session:</b>	<b>June 25<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Does God heal today?
<b>Eleventh Session:</b>	<b>July 2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	What about the Church?

## Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	The Hope Centre
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	Gregory Care
<b>Through Lent and Eastertide:</b>	<b>CAFOD</b>
Ordinary Time until the end of August:	Refreshment Fund
September until the Harvest collection:	CAFOD
After harvest until the beginning of Advent:	The Bible Society

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10am-12 pm.

**You are invited** to join pupils from the Northampton OLICAT Schools on their Lenten journey: Take time to be with Jesus to relive His suffering through the eyes of our young people in reflection, prayer and music. See poster for details.

**Light of Hope Service:** You are welcome to join for as short or long a time as you wish for a **Light of Hope event at Northampton Cathedral on Saturday 23rd March at any time from 1pm until 4pm.** There will be adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, music, refreshments in the hall and an opportunity to meet and chat with others. There is no need to book, just pop in and turn up on the day. During the event some people will be going out to invite others in the local area to come into the Cathedral, light a candle and write a prayer. If you would like to come earlier at 10.30am to find out more and get involved in this please see: [www.northamptondiocese.org/courses/the-joy-of-the-gospel-march-24/](http://www.northamptondiocese.org/courses/the-joy-of-the-gospel-march-24/) *"Do not be afraid to share with others the hope and joy of the risen Christ! Nurture the spark that has been kindled in you, but at the same time share it. You will come to realise that it grows by being given away! We cannot keep our Christian hope to ourselves, like a warm feeling, because it is meant for everyone."* Pope Francis

## Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:

**Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war: O God, author and lover of peace, to know you is to live, to serve you is to reign. Defend against every attack those who cry to you so that we, who trust in your protection, may not fear the weapons of any foe. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen**



# Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March: The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B

Today's reading from Chronicles recalls Israel's exile. The Temple, central to the Jewish religion, had been defiled, followed by Israel's seventy year exile in Babylon. Then the Persian King Cyrus called for the people to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple on Mount Moriah, where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac. After their return in 540 BC Ezra re-discovered the Jewish Law and the people renewed their covenant with God.

The Psalm then recalls how the Israelites refused to sing for their captors while in mourning for Mount Zion.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasises the unity of the world-wide Church, based firmly on God's saving love, shown in Jesus Christ. We have been saved by grace, a gift from God. The phrase "in Christ Jesus" occurs frequently, reminding us of the ending of every

Eucharistic Prayer. Christ will bring all things to perfection "in him" – and that includes us! "We are God's work of art".

In John's gospel, after telling Nicodemus that he must be "born again", Jesus tells him "God sent his Son into the world" so that "the world might be saved" through him. Jesus' coming provokes judgement, both now and in the future. If our deeds are true we come into the light.

Psalm Response:

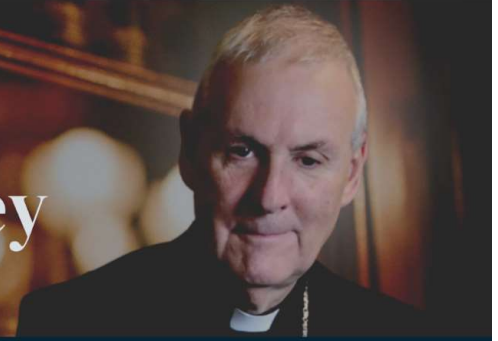
**O let my tongue cleave to my mouth  
if I remember you not!**

(2 Chron 36: 14-23; Psalm 136 (137); Eph 2: 4-10; John 3: 14-21)

*Chris Oliver*



**Bishop David Oakley**  
Bishop of Northampton



## *Bishop David writes:*

The Gospel today, and next week, is not from the Gospel of Mark. Instead, we listen to the Gospel of John. Jesus has called his first disciples. He has invited them to re-imagine faith as trust in him. They have witnessed the first sign, the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. And then that somewhat disturbing event, the cleansing of the Temple that we reflected upon last week.

Now we meet another character. Not one of the disciples as such, but one described as 'a leader of the Jews'. He is intrigued. He wants to know more. At the same time, Nicodemus is cautious. He wants to protect his reputation. Nicodemus has come to meet with Jesus by night. This great intellect is struggling to understand what Jesus is talking about. 'How can anyone be born after having grown old?' He is not prepared, at this point, to come out into the open about his interest in Jesus. And this blinds him to so many truths of God's Kingdom.

In today's Gospel, we join the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus towards the end. Nicodemus seems to be out of his depth. Our Lord is speaking about baptism. And the root of the word "baptism" is to be immersed into something. Through our baptism we are immersed into the life of the Blessed Trinity. We are born into the relationship that Jesus has with his heavenly Father. When Jesus is lifted up on the Cross, and sheds his last drop of blood in love for us, the gates of heaven are thrown open to us. And we receive all this when we are baptised.

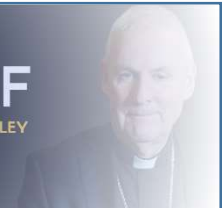
Perhaps we are inclined to imagine that the gift we receive in baptism must be carefully carried throughout our lives, so that we may be able to hand it back at the end. This is not how Jesus sees things. He does speak of the one servant who buries his gift in this manner. But he also speaks of others, servants who believe that what they have received, are gifts destined to grow.

We too hear the words Jesus spoke to Nicodemus. They are life-giving words which speak of God's love for our world. They witness to the eternal life, first offered us in baptism, and brought to new growth through our everyday lives of faith. The ancient philosophers thought that philosophy brought people out of darkness into light. The Gospel of Nicodemus shows us how challenging our minds can be at times, when it comes to receiving the Gospel of life. During these days of Lent, we are invited to walk humbly with the

Lord. Someone once said, faith is not about knowing something new, it's a new way of knowing. Through faith, we can see the world with different eyes. We recognise a world loved by God. And it is heart-breaking to witness all the pain and hurt around us. We need to find ways to speak the language of God's Kingdom to our world today. And that language is love.

*Bishop David*

## PILGRIMS OF AN EVENING WITH BISHOP DAVID OAKLEY HOPE



Bishop David will be coming to our parish on Monday September 9<sup>th</sup> to reflect on what it means to be a pilgrim of hope. It will begin at 7.00 pm

You are invited to attend and invite those who wish to discover more of the beauty of our Catholic faith.

## Born For This

BY JO BOYCE

Weston Favell Academy students will be taking to the stage to share a moving and powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross.

The performance will be at St Gregory's Church at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March (Wednesday in Holy Week)

(lasting approx. an hour)

It is FREE to all. Donations welcome.

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration:** Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.