



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

A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The radiance of the risen Lord shines upon us. At a time when so many shadows are cast into our lives, and upon our world, the light of the resurrection shines forever to renew and restore our hope.

In the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis: “In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.” (27 March 2020)

The impact of COVID-19, both nationally and internationally, has been immense. So much of what we take for granted has changed. Our health and physical interaction, our capacity to travel and gather, have all been affected. There is uncertainty in our future, especially with work and the country’s economy. As we know, very sadly, large numbers of people have died because of the coronavirus, and others have been or remain seriously ill. Keyworkers, not least in the National Health Service and care sectors, are serving selflessly to sustain the life of our nation. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone who is suffering because of COVID-19, and to all those battling to overcome its effects. May those who have died rest in peace and those who are bereaved find comfort.

When the Prime Minister announced the lockdown, this included places of worship and therefore Catholic churches. These measures were put in place to stem the general transmission of the virus. It is right that the Catholic community fulfills its role in contributing to the preservation of life and the common good of society. This must continue until the restrictions applied by the Government are lifted.

None of us would want to be in the situation in which we find ourselves. While the live-streaming of the Mass and other devotions is playing an important part in maintaining the life of faith, there is no substitute for Catholics being able to physically attend and participate in the celebration of the Mass and the other sacraments.

Our faith is expressed powerfully and beautifully though ‘seeing, touching, and tasting.’ We know that every bishop and every priest recognizes the pain of Catholics who, at present, cannot pray in church or receive the sacraments. This weighs heavily on our hearts. We are deeply moved by the Eucharistic yearning expressed by so many members of the faithful. We thank you

sincerely for your love for the Lord Jesus, present in the sacraments, and supremely so in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The bishops and priests of every diocese are remembering you and your loved ones at Mass each day in our churches as we pray ‘in hope of health and well-being.’ We thank our priests for this faithfulness to their calling.

As the Government’s restrictions are relaxed step by step, we look forward to opening our churches and resuming our liturgical, spiritual, catechetical, and pastoral life step by step. This will also be of service to those beyond the Catholic Church who depend on our charitable activity and outreach through which much goodness is shared by so many volunteers from our communities.

None of us knows, as yet, how or when the lockdown will end. There is likely to be a phased return to traveling and gathering. As a church, we are now planning for this time and our discussions with the statutory public health agencies and Government representatives are ongoing. Together with Catholics across England and Wales, we desire the opening of our churches and access to the sacraments. Until then, we are continuing to pray and prepare.

We want to acknowledge with gratitude the service of our fellow bishops and priests, our deacons and religious, our families and lay faithful, together with all our parish and school communities, for the wonderful ways the life of the faith is being nourished at this time, especially in the home. We also pay tribute to the Catholic organizations and networks that are working to support the vulnerable and needy.

On that first Easter day, the disciples were in lockdown and the doors were closed. In their isolation, the Lord Jesus came among them and said ‘Peace be with you.’ May the peace of the risen Lord reign in our hearts and homes as we look forward to the day we can enter church again and gather around the altar to offer together the Sacrifice of Praise.

We unite in asking the intercession of Our Blessed Lady and assure you of our prayers and blessing

Yours devotedly in Christ,

- ✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster
- ✠ Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool
- ✠ Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham
- ✠ George Stack, Archbishop of Cardiff
- ✠ John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

Notices of Interest

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 and this will be on the parish website and our parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>.

We have had 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.

75th Anniversary of VE Day: A Peace Rose was planed beside Our Lady in the garden to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of war in Europe. May Our Lady, Queen of Peace pray for us as we fight the virus of Corvid-19.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: The regular Thursday adoration is not taking place during this present emergency.

Bible Alive for Easter is now available. It has daily readings & good articles - all for only £2:50! If you want to purchase a copy, they are 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.

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: Most of the new planned giving boxes of envelopes have been delivered by hand, but if you can transfer to a standing order, that would be very helpful.

The Office: Working from home as much as possible (Mondays & Wednesdays) appears to be going reasonably smoothly! I can still access my emails, so if you need to speak to me please do email me at secretary@stgregory.org.uk. If you do need to speak to me by phone, I will be trying to get to the office on Fridays, so if it isn't urgent please leave a message. If you need to speak to me urgently by phone, please email me with your phone number & I'll phone you back. Don't worry, any personal details (ie your phone no.) will be deleted as soon as I've phoned you back! If it's urgent that you speak to a Priest directly, please speak to Fr. Andrew by phoning (01604)713015 & choosing option 2 or 3.

God bless and stay safe. *Caryll*

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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) or Fr Andrew.

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. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 30th October.

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

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 is 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 10th May 2020, 5th Sunday of Easter Year A

The Hellenists were Christian Greek-speaking Jews. A common way of resolving community arguments is schism: you go your way, we'll go ours. Significantly the early Christians managed to maintain fellowship by allowing each group to manage its own affairs. As Stephen's speech later shows, the Hellenists bitterly opposed the Jewish Temple authorities, who drove them out of Jerusalem, starting the spread of Christianity. The Apostles were not expelled, and continued their work, with many Jews including priests being converted.

The psalm praises the Lord's omnipotent power and kindness. Relying on His promises we can be confident he will rescue us.

Peter's letter continues encouraging persecuted Christians by reminding them that we are "a royal priesthood, ... a people set apart to sing God's praises". Every preface concludes with the words:

"every land, every people exults in your praise".

At Mass we – exercising our common priesthood that comes from our baptism – offer all we have done during the week, our presence together in community, and our material gifts, as a sacrifice to confirm our allegiance to Christ, just as God's sacrifice of his Son showed his love for us.

In John's Gospel, after washing the disciples' feet and foretelling his death, Jesus emphasises his intimate relationship with the Father, saying "to have seen me is to have seen the Father".

Psalm Response: **May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.**

(Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 32(33); 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 63: Living Sustainably with creation: When Doctors says a bar of soap is sufficient, why do we buy pump action handwash? The bar of soap lasts twice as long and costs half the price with no plastic!

Tip No. 64: Solidarity with the poor: we cannot give personal help but we can fund CAFOD Covid 19 Appeal ONLINE

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

Common Priesthood and Ministerial Priesthood

When the same word is used to mean different things, there is always a serious risk of confusion, but centuries of history and tradition have embedded language and a bit of confusion is inevitable.

When we read in the second reading that "you are a royal priesthood", St Peter is addressing all Christians; he calls them "the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus has made acceptable to God". Today we use the word "priest" more usually to refer to what is technically the "ministerial priesthood"; that is, those who are ordained to the sacred ministry of priest.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father." (*Apocalypse 1:6*) The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to be . . . a holy priesthood." (*Vatican II, Lumen Gentium 10 §1*)

The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ essentially. (*Lumen Gentium 10 §2*) In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace --a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit--, the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church §1546 – 1547*)

St Peter Chrysologos, bishop of Ravenna in the fifth century wrote in reference to St Paul's instruction to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (*Romans 12:1*):

"How marvellous is the priesthood of the Christian, for he is both the victim that is offered on his own behalf, and the priest who makes the offering" (*Sermon 108*). He continues:

"Each of us is called to be both a sacrifice to God and his priest. Do not forfeit what divine authority confers on you. Put on the garment of holiness, gird yourself with the belt of chastity. Let Christ be your helmet, let the cross on your forehead be your unflinching protection. Your breastplate should be the knowledge of God that he himself has given you. Keep burning continually the sweet smelling incense of prayer. Take up the sword of the Spirit. Let your heart be an altar. Then, with full confidence in God, present your body for sacrifice. God desires not death, but faith; God thirsts not for blood, but for self-surrender; God is appeased not by slaughter, but by the offering of your free will."

During this time of Spiritual Communion, it is good to pray that we may all exercise our common priesthood; the priesthood that comes from our Baptism. As such, we are all called to a life of holiness; we are called to a life of sacrificial love: "subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church" (*CCC 1269*), "reborn as sons of God, the baptised must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the people of God. (*CCC 1270*)

This might be an ideal time for us all to re-assess our life as a member of the common priesthood, and how, once this imposed time of isolation ("retreat") is over, what our "new normal" will be.



**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.**

