



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 Armour of Light

Armour is generally something solid, impenetrable, something to protect its wearer from deadly weapons and the dangers of the ‘outside’ world. Just think of the full body armour of a medieval European knight.

The armour of light, however, is quite the reverse. Instead of shutting its wearers off to protect them from the world, it *brings* light and warmth to the people. It is not armour worn out of fear, it is worn to give hope. In Romans 13:11-14, Paul urges us to put on this armour of light because in Christ, we have become creatures of day, creatures of hope. In Christ, the night of sin has passed and what we must now focus on are the ‘honourable’ deeds of daylight.

The world around us looks very dark and cold indeed. Skyrocketing prices are pushing people across the country quite literally into the cold and dark, as they have to make a choice between eating or heating. Many children and young adults in education more than ever need concrete support to cover basic needs like food.

In addition, young people are facing a mental health crisis of hitherto unknown proportions. According to the charity Young Minds, 1 in 6 young people have a probable mental health problem. An NHS survey in 2022 found that children with probable mental health problems felt

less safe at schools and were less likely to enjoy learning than those without a mental health disorder. Add to this the uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine and the worsening climate catastrophe (expressed in conditions such as climate anxiety and ecological grief), and it is no surprise that neither the present nor the future look like green pastures.

In Exodus 12, God is preparing the Israelites to leave Egypt, the country of their enslavement. The ultimate goal is the ‘land of milk and honey’, a place where they are meant to be free, meant to be able to be themselves, meant to flourish. According to the biblical narrative their journey will last 40 years (a whole generation) during which they wander through the desert, a place of (metaphorically speaking) chaos and entanglement in sin.

If we take seriously that we are indeed a people of light and hope in Christ, how can we bring this light and hope to the children and young adults in education? Even if it does take us a whole generation or more to resolve the problems we are facing now, let us make a start on this Education Sunday to think about ways in which we can journey together with the children and young adults in education, so they can find hope, light and a place in which they can flourish.

Dr Anna Krauss

Education Sunday

Education Sunday falls on the second Sunday of September, just as the new academic year starts and is one of the oldest Days of Special Prayer in England and Wales, established 175 years ago in 1848. It provides an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks to all involved in making Catholic schools places of enlightenment, as well as to look forward in anticipation of the year ahead.

Today we commemorate our predecessors of the 19th century, many of whom were living in poverty, paying for schools to be built. Our parishioner forebears and their Bishops rightly saw education as the principal means of handing on the faith and improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural lives of children and young people. Their sacrifices helped re-establish the 2,175 Catholic schools and four universities that we celebrate in church today.

In the 175 years since then the Catholic Church has become the country’s largest provider of secondary schools and second-largest provider of primary schools. Catholic education is by far the largest charitable activity of the Church here, and we give thanks for the many thousands of teachers, lecturers, academics, support staff, leaders,

governors, advisers and others who have found their vocation in Catholic education, and without whom this would be impossible.

Catholic schools continue to be true to their mission: they educate more pupils from the most deprived backgrounds; outperform national GCSE English and Maths averages by five percentage points; and are more ethnically diverse than other state-funded schools.

For this success to continue, however, the help of the whole Catholic community remains essential. As throughout history, all Catholics need to be prepared to support, promote and defend Catholic education. There are many ways to do this: in prayer for vocations to Catholic education; asking your diocese about becoming a school foundation governor; or encouraging a young person to become a teacher in a Catholic school. In this way, we can hand on to the next generation the great educational legacy of those poor and immigrant Catholic communities of the Victorian era who built our schools and universities. Catholic education is indeed a tremendous achievement to be celebrated -

Happy Education Sunday.

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Levi Traboc Sam
Elena-Anastasia Frincu and
Benedict Roger Smith
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

Car Park Safety: Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass - all stock is marked, so an easy task!
Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.

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

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.

Tots @ St Gregory's: St Greg's Tiny Tots are starting again this Tuesday September 12th. We meet each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks and coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, join us!!

Choir Notes: Next practice will be Saturday October 7th, 11am till 12:30pm. New faces with their voices welcome. *Alec*

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday evening, 25th Sept. at 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Enrolment for 2024 will be Sunday 8th Oct. after the 11am Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered & their parents at the 11am Mass on Sunday 5th Nov. All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates and times will be available at the registration. Please see the separate article on the way the programme works.

Confirmation in 2023: Confirmation sessions have resumed r, and those enrolled should have received an email with details.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Alpha in the Autumn: There will be a welcome session this week, on Tuesday 12th September in the Hall at 7.00 pm. Please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha and the zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session. It is not too late to join.

Missio: The autumn edition of "Mission Today" is available at back of church as you come in through main doors. I have arranged these in alphabetical order. Extras will be available for others who want to support this work through prayer & financial support. On page 3 is the statement: "Missio is proud to be the Pope's charity for world mission." Please rally round to help those not as fortunate as us. *Alec*

Parish Finances: Much the easiest way to support the parish financially is through a standing order directly from your own bank account. The information required for this 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)**

Thank you to all who supported the Fynnus Fogg evening and to all who provide toiletries for the Cathedral Foodstore. It is very much appreciated.

URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Church, from 10am-12pm.

Mission Northampton are running an on-line course on the letter of James entitled "Discerning God's Will". It will help you to understand this letter, and help in discerning every day and learn how, in the daily choices that we have to make, how to discern the will of God. Behind this is how we hear the voice of God in our daily life. The course will run on Wednesday evenings on Zoom beginning on September 13th, 7.30 to 9.00 pm— to sign up:
<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/james-discerning-gods-will-autumn-2023/>

Fewer Electrical Hazards: Many thanks to Daniel and his son, Matthew for changing all the main lights in the church for LED replacements which use much less power. There is now a new board with circuit breakers for the hall, kitchen and sacristy, meeting the current requirements. There are still a few small jobs needing to be done, but mostly we have put right things that were required. Part of safeguarding is to ensure that in every respect the church is as safe as possible for all who come here.

Fire Safety — Important notice. We have had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burn to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another.

Refreshment Donations: From now until the Harvest collection on Sunday October 8th refreshment donations after Sunday Mass and on Wednesday mornings is given to CAFOD. Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent	The Hope Centre
to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time	Gregory Care
to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	
Through Lent and Eastertide:	CAFOD
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

Mission Prayer

Heavenly Father
it is your will that we should make disciples of all nations.
We ask you to bless the mission of our Diocese of Northampton
and guide our hearts and minds
so that your will might be done
and your kingdom be build up here on earth.
We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
without which our work is in vain,
and we entrust ourselves to your beloved Son,
for we know that he is with us for all time, now and for ever.
Amen

Prayer for Ukraine:

Please continue to pray for an end to the war in Ukraine:

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

10th September 2023, 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Ezekiel says religious leaders have authority, but also daunting responsibility. Failing to instruct the people correctly will lead to the same fate as the sinners they have failed to guide wisely. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, Ezekiel promises hope for a future return to Jerusalem – but only if the people accept individual responsibility for sins and purify themselves of false gods.

The Psalm invites us to praise and worship the Lord daily, for he is our king and shepherd. We must not lose faith in God, as did the Israelites in their desert journey.

Paul's advice to the Romans on Christian living continues: obey secular authorities, whose authority comes from God, and pay the taxes and respect that is their due. Above all "love your neighbour as yourself".

The first reading, with the last verse of the Gospel reading, help us to understand the Gospel. "Where two or three meet in Jesus' name", Jesus will be in their midst – and by implication he will be guiding their decision-making, so their decisions will be in tune with God's will. The Church's awesome authority to include or exclude individuals on God's behalf is not to be exercised carelessly, but only after due deliberation by the whole Christian community.

Psalm Response: **O that today you would listen to his voice!
"Harden not your hearts".**

(Ezek 33:7-9; Ps 94(95): 1-2. 6-9 response: 7-8; Rom 13:8-10; Matt 18:15-20)

Chris Oliver

RAAC

It is good news to hear that none of our Catholic Schools are affected by crumbling concrete, they all having been surveyed earlier in the year.

Although the church roof does resemble the RAAC decking, it is in fact cavity decking, which is different. Instead of many little holes, each board has one big one, and is made not of aerated concrete but of asbestos. This is perfectly safe so long as it is not interfered with, and is showing no sign of collapse.

The Three Bees — The sign of the welcoming Church



Belong

Believe

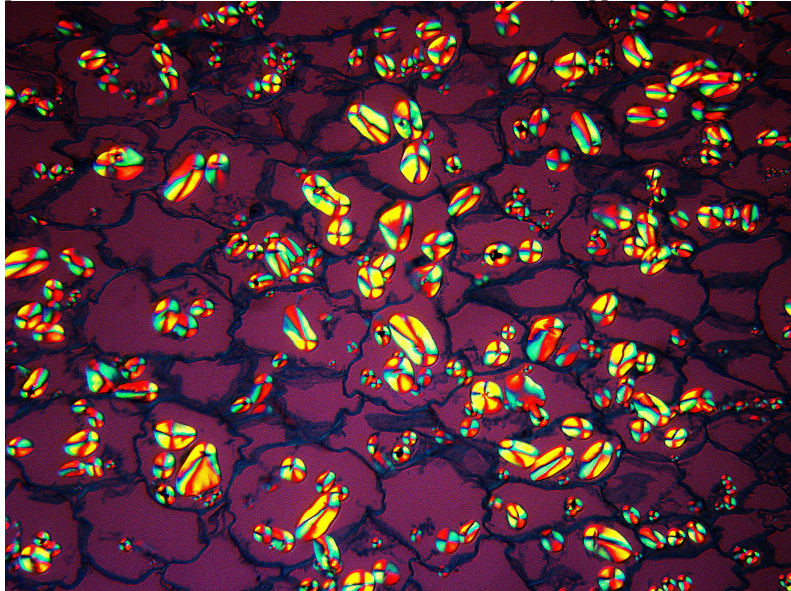
Behave

Part of the 'Alpha' experience is one of belonging, and belonging to a group that is part of the Church. Alpha is only the beginning of a road of discovery of the Christian Faith, a road that, within the Church, will bring people to the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

The Season of Creation

The 'Season of Creation' began on 1st September, and continues until the feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4th October.

Each week through the 'Season of Creation' there will be a microscope photograph in the newsletter taken by Mike Gibson, together with a description of the subject. We are blessed with wonderful nature programmes on television and Mike's pictures are offered to show a different view of God's wonderful work of creation. There is a beauty in these tiny pieces of creation; there is also a reason for their existence; they form part of our ecosystem, with a vital function in some way supporting the world we can see with the naked eye.



Most green plants, including staple foods such as wheat and vegetables, store energy in the form of starch in their leaves, roots, fruits and seeds. This photograph shows a section through a potato tuber viewed with a microscope using polarised light. The image is magnified around x200 times and clearly shows the many brightly-coloured and beautiful starch grains within the cell walls of the plant.

Starch and sugars are of course a product of photosynthesis, a process carried out by almost all green plants, from the tallest trees to the smallest single-celled organisms, such as the diatoms mentioned in last week's newsletter. In essence, photosynthesis uses energy from the sun to convert the raw materials of water and carbon dioxide into food and oxygen. As you enjoy your Sunday lunch do give a thought to God's wonderful and bounteous creation!

Mike Gibson FRMS

Why is 'Alpha' so important?

It is a command from God that we proclaim the Good News to all nations (including our own). We have always supported the missions, and think of that as important, and our support for 'Missio' in the parish is generous and consistent. However, the Church has only recently come to realise that mission in this country had become neglected.

Long before the time of Jesus, God had commanded that we should "teach our children" (*Deuteronomy 6:7*), but sadly we have had now several generations of children who, for a variety of reasons, have not received or accepted the teaching. In many ways, much of Western Europe has become mission territory. Alpha is not the only way to evangelise, but has proved effective in many places, and is making its impact here. Doing nothing is not an option!