



# 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

## Interpreting COVID

It would seem that we are soon to be given freedom from the legal restrictions due to the COVID pandemic. Freedom is a Biblical and theological concept as well as social and practical.

Most significantly in the Old Testament, we find the concept of freedom in the Passover story. It is a tale of two freedoms; first freedom from slavery, and secondly, freedom to go home.

The first of these is easy to understand, and while it took time to accomplish, once achieved became a matter of history. The second was much more problematic, and remained so until the Israelite people lost that freedom and were taken again into captivity in Assyria or Babylon.

The question is: “what do I do with my freedom?” Throughout the Book of Exodus, which tells the story of the Passover and the escape from Egypt, we hear of the grumbling of the people — even to the extent of wanting to go back into slavery. When they finally got home to their promised land, they still abused their freedom by ignoring God, disobeying him, even preferring false gods. The history books of the Bible, the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles describe this, and the prophets of the time, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah tell of God’s warning to them.

We are looking at the prospect of freedom from the legal restrictions, if not yet freedom from the fear of the virus. However, as more and more of us have the benefit of the vaccine, the risk of the virus causing serious illness is reduced and there is a great deal of confidence seen in the people willing to crowd into Wembley Stadium or Wimbledon and other venues.

[Please see the note elsewhere in this newsletter about COVID precautions after July 19<sup>th</sup>]

When the reality of freedom from COVID actually comes, and remember that Egypt had to endure ten plagues before the Israelites gained their freedom, we can still look forward to when that day comes, and consider not only what we are free *from* but also what we are free *for*.

How can we best use the freedom that we will have; what are we set free to do? Are we set free to simply carry on as before, or have we a new freedom; a freedom to find a ‘new normal’ rather than a return to the old ways.

One of the characteristic things of our age is the use of acronyms; sometimes very confusing. When the doctor’s surgery was closed, the instruction was given to ‘go to Miami’. This is an acronym for Minor Injuries and Minor Illness’, not an instruction to visit Florida!

The name of the disease the virus causes has been made an acronym, and irritating as this might be, the meaning is helpful to understanding what we can use our freedom for.

<b>C</b>	<b>Culturally Transformed</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Outward-facing</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Visionary</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Intentional</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Disciples</b>

This phrase might describe what we could be with our new freedom. We could be ‘culturally transformed, outward-facing, visionary and intentional disciples’.

What is **Cultural Transformation**? It is recognising that things were not perfect before COVID in many areas of life. Globally, with climate change and pollution. In society, with poverty, crime, social exclusion, racism, marriage breakdown and many other indicators of social malaise. In the Church, with our failure to make disciples and too many scandals. In our own life because of sin. Pope Francis’ book written during the pandemic: “Let us Dream” invites us to just such a cultural transformation, and while a global transformation requires more than just a few people, we can all examine what we can do in our own life, and what needs to be transformed in our own cultural behaviour. As a parish, it means that we are consciously and deliberately a ‘Missionary Parish’; not because the priest tells us; not because the Bishop tells us; not even because the Pope tells us, but because we know that it is what God tells us.

Within the Church we need to become more **Outward-facing**. We cannot just be inward-looking. The kitchen transformation is not simply for ourselves; it is so that we can be more invitational to others; to hospitality and eventually, to an encounter with Christ.

As a parish we have a vision, at the top of this page. But that is merely writing on a page. It only becomes as vision when we all recognise it as our collective vision. Then we become a **Visionary** parish, where everything that we do conforms to that vision of what we are and how we behave.

Being **Intentional** means thinking about what we are doing, and ensuring that it conforms to the vision. It means that we are deliberate in what we plan and do and that our priority is to do the will of God, not merely to please ourselves.

We are all called to be **Disciples**. A disciple is one who is learning; not one who already knows it all! We learn through our worship, through our prayer and through the many opportunities that God gives us. After COVID may we all be truly **COVID!**

*(Thanks to Fr James Mallon for the inspiration for this!)*



# Notices of Interest

**Bible Alive** for July & August is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church.

**Repository:** There is a display of cards & items for First Communion in the Foyer. If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church on Mon, Wed or Friday mornings & speak to the Secretary who will show you what to do & where to go.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

**Baptism Preparation:** The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September, 7pm. Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

**First Holy Communion 2021:** The programme is running through 'Loom', an on line platform used by many schools. Parents need to 'home-school' children. The programme is called "Growing Up Catholic", and there are 6 sessions preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, followed by six sessions preparing for First Holy Communion.

**Confirmation:** At last we have a date: 1<sup>st</sup> October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux! The Confirmation will be at St Gregory's.

**Readers at Mass:** If anyone wishes to become a reader at Mass (Sundays and Weekdays), please contact Deacon Michael, which will enable us to prepare rotas for when some sort of normality returns!

**Bishop David** has produced a series of short talks focussed on 'The Church'. These videos can be viewed on the Northampton Diocese YouTube channel. Simply type 'Northampton Diocese' into the search bar on YouTube and click on 'The Church' playlist. All the videos in this series so far will be displayed.

**In The Studio** will be live at 8pm on 15th July on our Youtube channel 'Luxnomo' - this online event is open to everyone of secondary school age and has great talks, prayer, Grill the Priest, a quiz and much more, all coming live from our studio!

**SPUC:** Help protect the lives of Unborn Children & send a message that abortion is harmful to unborn children & their mothers by joining this year's March for Life. The march is on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September & will take place in Central London. It is a great Pro Life event & it is encouraging to be with so many Pro Life supporters. For further details either go onto the March for Life website [marchforlife.co.uk](http://marchforlife.co.uk) or contact William on 07393965643 or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com). It is not enough just to say that we are Pro Life: we must take action to stop abortion & the terrible damage it is doing to vulnerable girls, women & their unborn children.

**Mission Northampton:** Mission Northampton will be based at the new St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral, but be a town-wide project involving all the parishes & Catholic schools in the town. It is being led by Fr David Donaghue, & there will be a variety of initiatives to seek to proclaim the Gospel, & make us all better missionary disciples. Please keep praying for it, & for our own parish, that we may become all that God wishes us to be, & that, like the first Christians, we may be devoted to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship, to the Breaking of Bread & to the prayers. May we all be truly missionary disciples, & this a missionary parish.

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

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

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

**Gregory Care Toiletries Appeal update:** Thank you for your continued support & for your generosity. We will keep you updated!

**Re-Envisioning Catechesis:** The Church has recently produced a new version of the "Directory for Catechesis", which makes clear the link between evangelisation & the teaching of the Faith. One fruit of this is that the diocesan department for catechesis has been moved from NORES to the new department for Mission. To help those engaged in Sacramental preparation, there will be an on line course over 5 consecutive Thursday evenings, starting 17<sup>th</sup> June 7.30 pm (ending at 8.45 pm) on Zoom. If anyone would like to take part, please let Fr Andrew know (by email, please), and the parish will make the booking. NORES provides various opportunities for Adult Education; the course for catechists started last week, and there will be a webinar on "Mark and John and the Word of Life — The Church draws her life from the Eucharist" on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 7.30 pm – 8.30. To register please email [admin@nores.org.uk](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk).

**Parish Finances:** We have received the return from the Diocese showing our parish account in full. There has not been time to prepare a full statement of accounts yet, but we have benefitted from a substantial legacy from Violette Caillebotte, which will go a long way to pay for the building of the parish office when the diocese eventually gives permission for this. This must wait until the diocesan finances have recovered from COVID. St Gregory's has weathered this storm thanks to your wonderful generosity. The diocesan office does not have a parish to support it, but its essential work has to continue in supporting the parishes, schools and chaplaincies.

**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)**

**The Catholicism Course:** Following on from the Alpha course which has just finished, the "Catholicism" course will be run on Tuesday evenings through the summer, starting at 7.30. While it does form a continuous course, each session does stand alone, so if you have to miss one or more, you can dip in to those you can. It will run on Zoom to start with, and depending on changes to regulations and if the participants would prefer, could change to 'face to face' later. There are ten sessions:

- 1 July 6<sup>th</sup> The revelation of God become Man
- 2 July 20<sup>th</sup> The Teaching of Jesus
- 3 July 27<sup>th</sup> God, than whom nothing greater can be thought
- 4 August 3<sup>rd</sup> Mary, Mother of God
- 5 August 10<sup>th</sup> Peter and Paul; the first Missions
- 6 August 17<sup>th</sup> Christ and the Church
- 7 August 24<sup>th</sup> The Eucharist
- 8 August 31<sup>st</sup> The Communion of Saints
- 9 September 7<sup>th</sup> Prayer and the Life of the Spirit
- 10 September 14<sup>th</sup> The Last Things

**The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word:** Tuesday 13 July 2021, (7.30-8.30pm) on Zoom.

Mark and John and the Word of Life 'The Church draws her life from the Eucharist' (Pope St John Paul II) led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell. The session will include input, prayer and the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Please register in advance to secure a place by email or phone: email [admin@nores.org.uk](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk) or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1) Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions. Thank you.

# Scripture Readings 11th July 2021, 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

The first six chapters of the Book of Amos show in detail why the Jews will suffer judgement. Amaziah denounces Amos to the northern king for his unwelcome prophecies. Speaking around 760 BC, Amos bravely ignores him, and continues to warn the people. 200 years later his warnings were written down – because he was right: the northern kingdom had rejected God, and was destroyed.

The Psalm describes the coming happiness revealed by the Lord: virtues are imagined as courtiers of the returned king.

Over the next seven weeks we hear extracts from Paul's breathtaking letter "to the Ephesians". Its ideas can flow past us so quickly that we can easily miss their significance. If we stop after each phrase and ponder its meaning, we see a God very different from common belief. A God who lovingly "chose us in Christ" "before the world was made". A God whose "hidden plan he so

kindly made in Christ from the beginning", so that we might "live through love in his presence". This was no 'plan B', suddenly concocted to correct a mistake!

In Mark's gospel, after his rejection in his home town we heard last week, Jesus now sends the disciples out on mission. Next week we hear about their experiences.

Psalm Response: **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.**

(Amos 7:12-15; Psalm 84(85): 9-14; Eph 1: 3-14; Mark 6: 7-13)

*Chris Oliver*

## Kitchen Makeover Update

**Kitchen:** The new gas cooker is due to be connected on Monday (12<sup>th</sup>) and that will be the final piece in the puzzle as then the kitchen will be fully operational and it will be possible to produce anything from a simple cup of tea or coffee to nourishing multi-course gastronomical delights. We are waiting for some extra items from suppliers and there are one or two odd jobs still to be done but there is one job the everyone can help with and that is the final cleaning of the kitchen and washing all the pots and pans etc. and putting them in their correct places. Please let either myself or Catherine Mulligan know when you can help with this essential job. I can't wait to see the first meal produced although we will have to wait until the covid restrictions allow. Many thanks to all those who have worked so hard and are still working on this major project and thanks to all those who have contributed in other ways.

**Rose Garden:** While at the church please do take the opportunity to see the new rose garden next to the main road. The garden was planted last autumn and is now in bloom and doing quite well for its first year and considering the unusual spring weather. The two main varieties are Thomas à Becket, named after one of our diocesan saints, and Boscobel. These are planted in groups of three with Thomas à Becket the deeper of the two reds. There are also two roses, Proper Job (deep crimson), adjacent to the Crucifix spotlights. In due course the roses will be labelled. The garden fence is looking very sad but there are plans in hand to replace it with a new wrought iron fence.

*Cliff Snelling*

## This is Sea Sunday — “Stella Maris”

Today is Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Today's second collection is for Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea), the Catholic Church's official maritime welfare agency. It supports seafarers both practically and spiritually. For an appeal talk from Bishop Paul Mason, and a video showing some of what Stella Maris does, please visit

[www.stellamaris.org.uk/SeaSunday](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/SeaSunday). This collection is vital to enable Stella Maris to continue its important work. To donate, please visit [www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate) or text 'SEA' to 70460 to donate £5. Stella Maris is dependent on voluntary donations, so please give generously. Thank you.

In 2020 they directly ministered to over 17,000 seafarers and fishers in the UK, supporting 83,050 people through the COVID restrictions, working in 64 ports across the UK.



Bob Maine is keen to continue the excellent work Tony Bull has done and asks for your prayers and to pray for the thousands of seafarers around the world. If you would like to know more about Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea), please see Bob.

## LIFE Matters

Last Monday an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill proposed by Dame Diana Johnson MP was withdrawn. The purpose of the amendment would have allowed abortion on demand for any reason right up to the moment of birth. It is gratifying that she received no support in Parliament for this amendment, and was even criticised by 'pro-choice' members of parliament. Nationally, only 1% of the UK population supports increasing the time for legal abortion according to a recent [savanta comres poll](#). As Catholics, we believe that the right to life exists from the moment of conception until natural death and support organisations that defend this right.

## Congratulations

Today Diane and Peter Phillips celebrate their Ruby Wedding anniversary. They attend the 11.00 Mass on Sundays, often with the dog they are training as a Medical Alert Assistance Dog. May God give them many more years of happiness together.

## Condolences

Please pray for Joe Waters who died last Sunday, brother-in-law of Margaret Wittich.





## SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021



<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>