



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

Evangelisation; a work of the Church

Last week we were invited to consider the first of the Councils of the Church, the ‘Council of Jerusalem’, recorded in chapter 15 of the Acts of the Apostles. Pope Francis encouraged us to realise that the prompting for the conclusion of the council was the Holy Spirit leading the Church in the fulfilment of the ‘Great Commission’ of Christ, to “go out and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

He now invites us to look at one of the documents of the most recent council of the Church, the Second Vatican Council. The Decree of the Missionary Activity of the Church, known as *Ad Gentes* from the first words in Latin of the text was one of the last to be issued from the Council, not because it is an afterthought, but because it derives from the deliberations of the nature of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, which covers a wider scope.

“There is a bridge between the first and last Council, under the banner of evangelization, a bridge whose architect is the Holy Spirit.”

It is important that we realise that evangelisation is a work of the Church; it is never solitary nor isolated, and never individualistic. The evangelist is not proclaiming him or herself, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of his body, the Church. The house must be built on the rock, not on the shifting sands of personal popularity, fame or celebrity.

“The evangelist must always transmit what he or she has received. St Paul was the first to write this: the Gospel that he announced and the community received, and in which they remained steadfast, is the same that the Apostle had in turn received. (*See 1 Corinthians 15:1-3*) Faith is received and transmitted.”

This is important to ensure that the Gospel remains authentic and not added to or has parts removed to suit the proclaimer or to adapt it to suit those to whom it is proclaimed.

“The same Paul writes to the Galatians: “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed” (*Galatians 1:8*).”

There is a constant temptation to modify the teaching of the Gospel to conform to the way of the world, or to that part of the world in which we live; to conform to what is fashionable. This is a great danger, but remaining firmly within the Church is a protection against this risk. This can be seen in the temptation to follow popular trends. This is the opposite of leading people to God. The Church is a pilgrim people, and heaven is our destination, not worldly popularity. The ultimate success of our evangelisation is measured by souls in heaven, not by any earthly statistics.

“The fundamental thing is the strength that the Spirit gives you to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the Gospel.”

The decree *Ad Gentes* begins with the affirmation that the Church is sent by God to the nations of the world to be a “universal sacrament of salvation” (*quoting Vatican II Lumen Gentium §48*) and that the task of the Church is to continue the mission of Christ, who was “sent to preach the Gospel to the poor”; therefore, “the Church, prompted by the Holy Spirit, must walk in the same path on which Christ walked: a path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death, from which death He came forth a victor by His resurrection” (*Ad Gentes §5*).

Pope Francis is using the phrase “Apostolic zeal” or “Missionary zeal” in many of these sessions of teaching on evangelisation. He says that this is not found just in enthusiasm, but in the realisation that it is a grace from God. It is the whole Church that is evangelistic, made real in many different ways by the entire pilgrim people of God.

Evangelisation flows from the fount of divine love of God the Father, who created us in love and calls us to share in his divine life.

“The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”. (*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 24th November 2013*)

Being a ‘Missionary Disciple’ does not force us into a particular way of discipleship beyond that of being a faithful Christian.

By virtue of the Baptism received and the consequent incorporation in the Church, every baptized person participates in the mission of the Church and, in this, in the mission of Christ the King, Priest and Prophet. Brothers and sisters, this task “is one and the same everywhere and in every condition, even though it may be carried out differently according to circumstances” (*Ad Gentes §6*). This invites us not to become rigid or fossilized; it redeems us from that restlessness that is not of God. The missionary zeal of the believer also expresses itself as a creative search for new ways of proclaiming and witnessing, new ways of encountering the wounded humanity that Christ took on. In short, of new ways of serving the Gospel and serving humanity. Evangelization is a service.

The fount of God’s love does not leave us in a state of imprisonment; rather it is freedom to live in the beauty of the love of God, and the freedom to share that love with others in ways both new and old, that, within the community of faith which is the Church, travelling along the roads of life, together we may all reach the glory of our heavenly destination.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 8th March 2023

Notices of Interest

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! There is now a display of St Patrick Day Cards, Easter Cards and Easter Mass Bouquet Cards. We also 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. PS: There are still some Diaries available.

Matilda, the Musical: You are invited to join us at Thomas Becket Catholic School as our students perform **Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical** 15th & 16th March, 6pm. Please see poster in the Narthex for more information. Tickets can be purchased in advance from the school office.

Grief to Grace: Grief to Grace is a specialised 5 day residential programme of spiritual & psychological healing for anyone who has suffered sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those who are the victims of rape, incest or abuse by a member of the clergy. For details please see www.griefftograceuk.org, email info@griefftograceuk.org, contact 02081542719 or see posters in the Narthex.

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

The Annunciation of the Lord: 24-hour Adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. There will be 24-hour Adoration at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Adoration will start after the 10.30am Mass on Friday 24th March and will conclude with 9.30am Mass on Saturday 25th March. If you can commit to an hour, please phone Gillian on 07724337202, if you can't commit just come along. Thank you.

Choir notes: starting March 18, we need to have a **very short practice** (10 min max) after 11:00 Mass on each of the remaining Sundays of Lent to perfect a couple of tricky bits for Holy Week. *Alec*

Missio/Red Box: Father Andrew rightly complimented us for our generosity towards a number of charities. The last Missio list put St Gregory's top parish in our diocese. Times are hard, but this makes your sharing with others all the more praiseworthy. Your prayers are invaluable. Envelopes containing the latest Missio magazine are available, in alphabetical order, on the table by the confessionals. Please collect yours. I have left some spares too for any new participants. *Alec*

CAFOD Big Lent Walk: Kevin and Aideen have walked 70k so far - thank you for sponsoring us both directly and online!

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

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it.

Stations of the Cross: Malcolm Arnold 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 6pm on Monday 27th March** (lasting approx. an hour). It is FREE to all.

Church Heating: Weekday Mass and Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

Northampton Catholic Schools Lenten Reflection. Wednesday 22nd March at 5pm at The Cathedral. You are invited to join pupils from the Northampton Catholic Schools on their Lenten journey: take time to be with Jesus to relieve His suffering through the eyes of our young people in reflection, prayer and music.

Fire Safety — Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned 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. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

Encounter - Saturday 25th March 2023 Encounter enables participants to deepen their relationship with God as well as discovering a renewed desire to share their faith with others. This will take place at St Gregory's Church Hall. Please contact Maria Heath: Maria.mission@northamptondiocese.org or <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/encounter-northampton/>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be reported here shortly. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Congratulations to all children who have enrolled on the First Holy Communion programme. You will now have all the dates of sessions. Please try to attend them all, and please enjoy the course!

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

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)**

Diocesan Employment Opportunities:

1. Fundraising Manager, 40 hours per week, Start date: April 2023. We are currently recruiting for an experienced Fundraising Manager to lead the development and delivery of the diocesan fundraising plan with the principle aim of proactively securing growth of income from charitable trusts, foundations and grant giving bodies. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/job/fundraising-manager/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org

2. Diocesan Information Manager, 3 days per week, Start date: May 2023. We are currently recruiting for an Information Manager to join our Diocese. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org The closing date for applications will be Friday 31st March. Interviews dates to be confirmed.

Tots @ St Gregory's has restarted: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!

Prayers 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

Scripture Readings 12th March 2023, 3rd Sunday of Lent, Year A

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt about 1300 BC, probably under Ramses II. God gave them food and water while they wandered in the wilderness. But they grumbled, losing faith that “God was with them”. “Massah” means “test”, “Meribah” means “quarrelling”. As this was before they made the covenant with God by Sinai, they are not punished yet. But this generation will not enter the promised land.

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 on their desert journey.

Paul tells the Romans that God loves and forgives us, just as he continued caring for the ungrateful Israelites. Christ died for us, proving God’s love, gaining pardon for all humanity and access to his grace through faith.

We hear the first 3 gospels over 3 years, but we hear parts of John’s gospel every year during Lent and Easter. Today Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. John carefully moves the characters on and off stage as the woman gradually comes towards faith in Jesus. Then, while still unsure, she goes and brings the rest of the Samaritans in her town to hear this man, wondering “Could he possibly be the Messiah?”

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

(Exodus 17:3-7; Psalm 94(95); Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42)

Chris Oliver

Alpha beginning on March 14th 2023

Alpha begins this week, and following last week’s appeal, a number of people have signed up. Thank you! There is still space for a few more; if you are thinking about it, please sign up using the on-line link at: www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha. It is important that the Alpha Team have an idea of numbers as soon as possible, so if you would like to take part in this course, please sign up as soon as you can. If you prefer not to enrol on line, please speak to one of the Alpha Team who will ensure that there is a place for you. If you have any food allergies it is important that we know in advance.

First session:	March 14 th 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21 st 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28 th 2023:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18 th 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25 th 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2 nd 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9 th 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12 th /13 th 2023	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16 th 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23 rd 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6 th 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13 th 2023:	What about the Church?

Gregory Care

Save the Date

Bank Holiday Monday, 8th May
from 12 noon at St Gregory’s.

Planning is in full swing for the
Coronation Big Lunch.

We hope many of you can join in this
community celebration.

More details to follow, so watch this
space.



CAFOD LENT FAST DAY

Many thanks for your wonderful
response last week. The fund
remains open throughout Lent and
Eastertide for further donations.

The CAFOD box at the back of the
church available every day.

Thank you for your support for
Gregory Care. Please continue to
give toiletries for the Cathedral
Foodstore.

CAFOD BIG WALK

Kevin and Aideen Fogarty have
signed up to do the Walk. We will
together walk 200K in 40 days
(70K so far).

We hope you will sponsor us in this
effort. A sponsorship form will be
available at the back of the Church, or
you can go online to donate at
<https://cafod.org.uk/give>

Thank you all so very much for your
generosity!

The Woman at the Well

The Samaritan woman of whom we read in the Gospel today was one of the first evangelisers. She was not one of the apostles, she had received no special training, but she had met Jesus and recognised him as the Messiah (*John 4:29*). The sequence of events in this story is important. Jesus makes the first move by speaking to her. Through conversation with him she is honest about her life. She realises her need for God, and Jesus speaks to her about the ‘living water’ of Baptism. The Church (us) is the living Jesus today, and we must speak to the people who need that living water in their life. We must be like the woman at the well in Samaria!



The Coronation of Our Lady
Eve Prada has given us a reproduction of the painting by Fra Angelico of the Coronation of our Lady; the original of which is in the Louvre in Paris, having been plundered by Napoleon from the friary at Fiesole where it was painted in 1434 or 1435. In the lower part of the painting are a number of saints. How many of them can you identify? No prizes, but do have a look!