



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

To the children of men, He has given the earth.

The Bible contains apparently conflicting ideas about the occupation of lands. On the one hand, we read in Genesis at the end of the flood that Noah and his children were to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”. (*Genesis 9:1*) After the sin of Babel, the inhabitants of the world started to speak in different languages and were scattered throughout the world (*Genesis 11:9*), and then we see the beginnings of tribalism, with the descendants of Shem being based in what is modern Iraq, the descendants of Ham being in modern Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt, and the descendants of Japheth moving further north to modern Turkey, across the Mediterranean islands and further west.

Abraham was a descendant of Shem (*Genesis 11:10-26*), but was told by God to move to Caanan (within the land occupied by the descendants of Ham), and God promises to Abraham the land and that he will become a great nation. (*Genesis 12:1-2*). It is at this time that we see tribal wars between the different descendants of Noah, and from then on much of the Old Testament involves fighting over the land.

However, there is another contrasting theme which appears in the Old Testament which is respect for the stranger and the foreigner. For example:

📖 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.” (*Leviticus 19:9-10*)

📖 “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” (*Deuteronomy 10:17-19*)

📖 “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” (*Exodus 22:21*)

Whatever the Bible may say about ‘The Land’, meaning the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, the Old Testament gives no justification for oppressing foreigners within the land, and by the time in history when we reach the New Testament, the sense of the Royal Kingdom of David was long past. David had died around 960 BC, and Solomon around 920 BC, and after him the Kingdom had divided, with the North falling to the Assyrians in around 721 BC, and the South (Judah) being taken into exile in Babylon in 587 BC. The time since there had, in any real sense, been a Royal Kingdom was equivalent to before Columbus sailed to America in relation to the present day! By the time of Jesus, it was the Romans who ruled ‘The Land’, with Herod as puppet-king.

Jesus is generally silent on political rule; he clearly has no intention of overthrowing the Roman rule and re-establishing the Davidic Kingdom. He does tell us that we should pay our just taxes, and St Peter tells us to “honour the emperor”. (*1 Peter 2:17*) The early Church grew and thrived in a secular society in spite of persecution.

When it became clear that Gentile converts to Christianity were not to be compelled to conform to Jewish laws, it equally became clear that the Church was not tied to any particular secular authority or any particular land. Indeed, the command of Jesus had been to take the Gospel to “the ends of the earth”. (*Acts 1:8*)

Secular rulers throughout Christian history have sought to harness religion to bolster their power or to detect disloyalty. The martyrdom of so many Christians in the early years of the Church arose because they were considered disloyal to the empire because they could not recognise the Emperor as a god, and burn incense at his altar. The oppression of Jews and Moslems in Europe has been a consequence of this, and during the era of the Protestant reformation both Protestant and Catholic rulers persecuted and put to death those who followed other religions .

We understand that all the earth is created by God, and given to mankind; no race, no language, no religion has exclusive right to any particular territory, and that any unjust discrimination against anyone is contrary to God’s plan of love and salvation.

Today both Protestants and Catholics recognise that racial justice is important, and recognise today as a day of prayer for racial justice.

Notices of Interest

THE BIG SLEEPOUT 2022!

Saturday 26th February from 7.30pm till Sunday 7.30am.
Siobhan O'Donovan and Lorna Heron are sleeping out this year.

Please can you sponsor them?

There are sponsorship forms at both doors if you would like to add your name. They both also have a Just Giving page if you would prefer to do it online!

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/siobhanbigsleepout2022>

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lornaheron>

Thank you all for your continuous support and generosity.

Siobhan & Lorna

Bible Alive for February & March 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: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass and there is a small supply of St. Patrick's Day cards. 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

A Free Lunch? There is no such thing, but there will be a free dinner on Tuesday evening, March 8th at 7.30 pm. There really is no catch, except that if you enjoy the evening, you may like to become involved in the Alpha programme. If you don't, no problem!

Next Alpha Dates: The next Alpha will begin on Tuesday April 26th, and be on Tuesday evenings until 12th July except during school half-term. (Also Friday to Saturday 17th to 18th June)

Tots @ St Gregory's: TINY TOTS look forward to seeing you: if you have charge of a pre-school child, from 9:30- 11:30 on a Tuesday morning, you are most welcome!

Gregory Care update on toiletry donations: Thank you to everyone who has donated toiletries to be sent out with food bags from the cathedral.

Food Parcels: Please get in touch with Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

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

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)

Parish and Diocesan Finances: There are still calculations to be done in relation to our financial contribution to the Diocese, but a rough estimate is that we will need to find a further £164 each week for this. Although we know the effect of the raised gas prices for domestic users, the Church as a charity is treated differently and the implications of the price rise are not yet clear. This will impact seriously on our parish finances. As fuller figures become available, they will be published and a parish budget for the coming year will be published. As we do this, it would be helpful if we all looked at our own personal and family giving to the Church. One significant help would be to make your giving through standing order; the details of our account are above, and if you pay income tax, please ask for a Gift Aid form.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 21st February, 7.00 pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: There will be six 'in-person' sessions preparing for first Reconciliation, both at Sacred Heart church, Weston Favell from 3.00 pm until 5.00 pm on Saturdays, 4th and 11th December before the Christmas break. Those preparing on-line will receive emails with what they need. After Christmas there will be sessions on January 15th, 22nd and 29th and on February 5th.

Confirmation in 2022: Confirmation classes will start soon. Confirmation will take place on Saturday 2nd July. Registration will open 13th March for two weeks. The course will commence thereafter.

Synod News! The Synod discussions are continuing this week.

This is your chance to express your views on:

- ? What it means to you to be a Catholic
- ? What are your experiences of the Church doing something well
- ? What are your experiences of when things have not gone so well
- ? What are your dreams for the Church
- ? How do you feel about the Alpha programme

Today after the 11.00 am Mass in the hall, come and have a piece of cake and a cuppa and join us, we'll even provide refreshments!

YOU ARE ADVISED NOT TO PARK IN THE CAR PARK if you do not wish to get blocked in.

If you cannot make this or any of the sessions that have already taken place, and would like to be part of the discussion, please contact Catherine Mulligan or Jehanne Houghton in the hall after Mass or via the Parish Secretary to arrange a meeting.

There is a box on the table at the exit from the church marked SYNOD (near the sanitisers) if you prefer to answer the questions individually or with family. Responses need to be returned as soon as possible. **All responses are confidential and anonymous.**

Choir Matters Change: by popular demand, our next practice will be after the 7pm Mass on Ash Wed (Mar 2) and will see the launch of our Holy Week & Easter programme; this date replaces Mar 4. After that it is business as usual: Fridays 1:45 - 3 pm: Mar 11, 18, 25, Apr 1 & 8. We are now blessed with a strong contingent of men singers but we need more ladies to keep the men in check & to replace others who have become unwell or simply had enough of me. *Alec*

Courses for Readers: The Bible Timeline course has resumed after the Christmas break, and continues on Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. Last week we considered the time of exile in Babylon and studied parts of the books of Daniel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Next week we will be moving on to the return from exile, with a focus on the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

Pivotal Players: We have come to the end of the first set of the Pivotal Players, but thanks to Bob Maine we can access the remaining sessions. They are not available on DVD, but Bob has an account which permits him to share them over Zoom. All being well, this week we will look at St Augustine of Hippo, who was foundational in the formulation of Christian theology in the fourth and early fifth century. Please email Fr Andrew for the Zoom links.

Valentine's Day: Valentine was an early Roman martyr about whom very little is known; and so was dropped from the Calendar. His day became associated with love because this is the time that birds start building their nests and mating, not because of the Saint!

Scripture Readings 13th February 2022, 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Jeremiah lived through a stormy period about 600 BC, before and during the exile. He suffered much through sieges and imprisonments, his life and death showing many similarities with Jesus. The despair he felt at the sins of his people against God's covenant may have led him to doubt. But doubt can lead to re-examination of beliefs: Jeremiah never lost hope that God is merciful, and his new covenant would save his people. We may wrestle with sin engraved on the heart, treasures will be taken away, but we must trust in the Lord to lead us through our troubles.

Paul had reminded the Corinthians of the centrality of the resurrection to our faith. Now he explains: without Christ's resurrection from the dead, there is no resurrection of the body for us. Therefore no bodily life after our death – this life is all we

have. He compares the resurrection of the dead to sowing a seed: the body which dies "is not the body which is to be", which will be energised by the Spirit. "What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable".

In Luke's gospel Jesus had chosen the twelve from his disciples, clearly indicating to Jews his new approach. Jesus proclaims God's justice is coming. Good news for those treated unfairly, not good for those behaving unjustly.

Psalm Response: **Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.**

(Jer 17: 5-8; Psalm 1:1-4,6; 1 Cor 15:12,16-20; Luke 6: 17,20-26)

Chris Oliver

Maria Heath

As of the beginning of February, I am no longer working at St. Gregory's Parish. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the last 12 years. I have enjoyed getting to know, and working with so many of you. It has been a privilege to be part of building a missionary parish and I am confident that with so many wonderful people committed to ensuring our parish continues on this journey, it will go from strength to strength.

I will still be around as I am a parishioner at St. Gregory's but I am now working 3 days a week for the Diocese of Northampton. Last year Bishop David set up a new office with the Diocese known as 'Mission Northampton'. You can read more about it by following this link: <https://northamptondiocese.org/mission-northampton/>

I am the training leader and my main job is training missionary disciples in the Diocese. As part of my job I am running courses which anyone is welcome to come on. There are 2 that are available at the moment and it'd be great to see some of you there!

A Weekend Journey to Emmaus

(Milton Keynes): Saturday 12th – Sunday 13th March 2022 (£35)

A heart warming journey with Jesus as he explains the Scriptures.

The road to Emmaus must be walked by all who wish to evangelise, since our hearts must be burning with the fire of the Word, in order to touch others with our words.

'Emmaus' will:

- Deepen your appreciation of the Scriptures.
- Enable you to experience the power of the Word of God.
- Take you on a journey through the Old Testament and show how it is fulfilled in Jesus.
- Give you a burning desire to return from 'Emmaus' to 'Jerusalem' to announce your encounter with the Risen Lord.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/a-weekend-journey-to-emmaus-march-2022/>

James: Discerning God's Will

The course will take place over seven Wednesday evenings on Zoom, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm on: 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March, 6th, 20th, 27th April 2022. (£5)

The Letter of James is full of inspiration and practical wisdom which enables believers to discover and discern the way God calls them to live each day. Everyone who wants to share their faith with others needs to grow in their ability to hear God clearly.

Taking part in 'James' will:

- Deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Letter of St. James.
- Help you to learn how to discern your daily life in the light of the Word of God.
- Deepen your ability to hear and recognise the voice of the Lord.
- Provide principles for approaching the art of discernment.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/james-discerning-gods-will/>

An Invitation to all who volunteer in the Parish

The parish could not function without the help of many, many volunteers who help in a vast number of different ways. Some are very obvious and can be seen; but others are 'behind the scenes' and less visible. We have been going through a tough time in many different ways, and this is a way of saying 'thank you'. On Friday March 18th there will be a dinner in the hall, to which all volunteers for the parish are invited. There is no charge – this is not a fund-

raising occasion, no raffle, no collection plate, just an occasion for the parish to say thank you to all who give so generously. The only condition is that you RSVP to this invitation by email to Helen at helentme00@hotmail.com so that we know the numbers and can cater adequately. It will be a proper meal (don't eat first), but being a Friday, will not involve meat.

Volunteers needed; but not until the weather is better!

On Friday 4th February we had the quinquennial survey of the church by the Diocesan surveyor. Mercifully no disastrous issues came to light, but we have a number of matters which we are required to deal with this year, however, most of which we can do ourselves, although volunteers will be needed. Most importantly, the external barge-boards of the hall need re-painting. This can be done off a ladder, it was last done about ten years ago, and is a two-person job in good weather. Slightly less important but more labour-intensive is the re-painting of the inside of the church side aisles. The North aisle was re-

painted some years ago, but the South aisle has not been re-painted since the mid 90s. From past experience, each aisle can be done inside a week if a good team of painters and labourers can be assembled.

It will be best to save this until better weather, so there will be an appeal for volunteers, including some who are willing to work on the top of the scaffold tower.

In order to plan this, if anyone is willing to help, either as painter, labourer or tea-person, please can you contact Cliff Snelling at cliff.snelling@btinternet.com, indicating available weeks.

How Alpha Works — and Why

Alpha works because it uses the same methods that Jesus himself used. It uses personal contacts. Jesus said to Andrew: “Come and see” (*John 1:39*), and it is the same invitation that we make. Like Jesus, who so often in the Gospels is seen at a meal with others, Alpha is set in the context of a meal. It is not Mass, but could be seen as looking forward to when everyone at Alpha can share in the Eucharistic meal — what theologians call an ‘allegory’ of the Mass. St Paul speaks of ‘children in the faith’ not being ready for solid food (*1 Corinthians 3:1-2*), and Alpha is like coming to see Jesus in the person of some of his disciples. Having ‘come and seen’, people are free to make their own decision. Thankfully, many decide to get to know Jesus better. Alpha is also ideal for the Church community as it uses so many different talents and skills, and does not force people out of their ‘comfort zones’. It needs the talents of the cooking team; the team who prepare the room, the table hosts and table leaders. It needs the skill of the technicians, and of musicians. Above all, it needs the support of prayer, and it needs people to invite others to ‘come and see’.

DIocese of Northampton Liturgy Commission- Liturgical Formation

The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word



A Series of online Zoom Sessions exploring the upcoming Lectionary Readings and Seasons of the Liturgical Year. A valuable opportunity to develop our engagement with the Scriptures that we hear proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word at Mass.

Led by the Liturgical Formation Team with presentations by Liz Clark, Fr Allan Jones CRIC, Mgr Kevin McGinnell & Fr Andrew Behrens

Wednesday 23 February 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for Lent

Wednesday 6 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for the Triduum

Wednesday 20 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Celebrating Eastertide

Each session will include input, prayer and the opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Cost: No charge but there will be the opportunity to make a donation

Please register in advance to secure a place by e mail or phone: email 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.

(Photo from www.pexels.com)

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen

*It's a huge undertaking,
but the Synod is getting
underway in our diocese.*

Synod 2021-23

- How we will manage our conversations in the parish will be announced soon. Pope Francis is clear that the voices of the loud and powerful and those with an axe to grind or a bee in their bonnet should not drown out the voice of the quiet and the marginalised.

St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which we are hoping will be able to be in the hall and in person. It is highly recommended for everyone, and is very enjoyable. Each session starts with a good meal (A proper evening meal, not just a snack), then we watch a film together about our faith. After the film we have a conversation around our table about what we have seen and heard. It is good to have established believers as well as potential converts and those who simply want to know more about our faith. Please come, and if you can, bring a friend. There is no charge, but donations are cheerfully accepted. For catering purposes, please register at

www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha

First session:	After Easter 2022: Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	After Easter 2022: Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	After Easter 2022: Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	After Easter 2022: How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session:	After Easter 2022: Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	After Easter 2022: How does God guide us?
Seventh Session:	After Easter 2022: Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day:	After Easter 2022: Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	After Easter 2022: How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	After Easter 2022: Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session:	After Easter 2022: What about the Church?
Eleventh Session:	After Easter 2022: What about the rest of my life?