



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

Parables of the Kingdom

Much of the teaching of Jesus is in parables, and he gives us an explanation for this. He tells the disciples: “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [those who do not follow Jesus] it has not been given. . . . The reason I speak to them in parables is that seeing they do not perceive and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.” (*Matthew 13:11,13*)

The biblical scholar, C. H. Dodd wrote that a parable is a “metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.” (*The Parables of the Kingdom*) There is a further important point to be made; they are all descriptive, they are not definitions. Jesus offers us pictures of what the kingdom is like, not definitions of that it actually is.

We could draw two conclusions from this; first, that this is more useful to us, and secondly, that our limited understanding would not be able to grasp the ‘breadth and length and height and depth’ (*Ephesians 3:18*) of the mysteries of the kingdom which is beyond knowledge.

We must therefore be careful to see what it is that Jesus is actually teaching us. Our Gospel today relates to two parables which are to do with seeds.

The first parable speaks of how seeds germinate and grow. But before any of that can happen, the seed must be sown. The parable is not specific about who it is that sows the seed — unlike in the parable of the sower where we understand the sower to be Jesus. This is certainly the interpretation of St Thomas in one of his great hymns for Corpus Christi: “scattered he the Gospel Seed” (*Pange lingua gloriosi*); however in today’s parable, anyone could be the sower, who in some way plants a seed of faith in the heart of someone else.

Before moving on, it is worth thinking how the seed is sown. In pre-mechanised days, the seed was just scattered; indeed the parable of the sower suggests that it was totally random; much falling on unproductive land. This could be thought of as very inefficient, but it speaks to us of the bountiful generosity of God,

and if we are to be the sower, we too need to sow even where there seems to be little chance of the seed bearing fruit.

The seed is not to be identified solely with words, either spoken or written. The second century writer Tertullian spoke of the ‘blood of the martyrs being the seed of the Church’ (*Apologeticus*), but the seed can take the form of any of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control); any of the corporal works of mercy (feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming a stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoner, burying the dead) or indeed the example of Christian living.

We can be sowing the seed without being conscious of it. Indeed our constant aim should be to live the life of Jesus, and this is in itself an act of seed-sowing.



Once sown, the seed must first germinate to sprout and grow, and this happens without our intervention. In fact, if we were to dig up and inspect the plant, we would probably kill it. We have to trust God to do his work, just as he trusts us to do ours.

The parable suggests three phases of the life of the plant: “first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear”. These three phases speak to us of what is sometimes called the ‘cycle of discipleship’.

The first phase in discipleship is one of growing in knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Church. In the second phase we are fully grown, but not yet fruitful, and in the third the grain in the ear is the seed for the next generation, and we become missionary disciples — we become sowers ourselves.

This parable speaks to us of the regeneration of the Church in every age, and this is what the Kingdom of God is like. It has been so for two millennia, and we are called to be part of this continual act of mission leading the Church into the next generation.

The normal mustard plant does not grow very big, but the picture is of *Salvadora Persica*, also known as the mustard bush, which can grow to 7 metres. It is used for cleaning teeth in Middle-eastern countries. English mustard is *Sinapis Arvensis*.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for June is now available. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church.

Repository: A display of cards and items for First Communion has been added now that we know the dates. If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10am & speak to a Steward who will show you what to do & where to go.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Isabelle Petrila
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for her and her family.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place. The next preparation will be Monday 5th July, 7pm, in the Sacristy.

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: 1st October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux! The Confirmation will be at St Gregory's.

Adult Confirmandii: If you are one of our adult Confirmandii who started preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2020 with Fr. Jerry (Sacred Heart), please, if possible, would you attend a short meeting at Sacred Heart Church on **Sat. 26th June, 2.30pm**, regarding Confirmation.

2020 Confirmation Class (postponed due to Covid): All those who started the Confirmation sessions in **Jan 2020** & hope to be Confirmed later this year are to attend a Confirmation Class on **Sat. 26th June at 2.30pm**, Sacred Heart Church Hall. Please check your emails from the Team for details. Parents are also required to attend with their children at 2.30 pm for a short meeting. Thank you.

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.

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.

Right To Life: Carla Lockhart MP has launched a parliamentary motion calling on the Government to end 'DIY' home abortion. Right To Life UK has launched an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple for you to send an email to your MP asking them to sign the motion. Please click the link below to contact your MP now. It only takes 30 seconds! www.righttolife.org.uk/DIYmotion

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.

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 17th 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.

Gregory Care Toiletries appeal update: Thank you for your continued support. Many thanks again for your generosity. We will keep you updated!

CAFOD: As coronavirus brings devastation across India, CAFOD is working with Caritas India to provide vital support to poor communities. Already £200,000 has been pledged. This helps to distribute PPE kits to health workers, promote COVID & vaccine awareness campaigns, & set up safely run isolation & quarantine centres. You can donate online here: cafod.org.uk/give. Please pray for the people of India & all those affected by the pandemic.

Lifeteen Summer Camp 2021: From Wednesday 28th July, 3pm to Sunday 1st August till 2pm. Cost £225.00 for camping (provide own tent), £275.00 for dormitory, £50.00 for online camp. £50.00 non-refundable deposit when booking, final payment by 1st July. Alton Castle, Staffs (transport NOT be provided). Summer Camp is 5 days of fun & activities where young Catholics gain formation & friendships. Included in price is accommodation, food, daily Mass & Reconciliation, activities including a day at Alton Towers, biking, trekking, climbing, archery, campfires and much more. More info and to go to the bookings page visit <https://nymo.org/summertime/>

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)**

Track and Trace: The government have now released their app to support track & trace & we have a QR code which can be scanned to record your presence at church. This is not obligatory, but should help in the important task of controlling the spread of the virus. As responsible members of society, we should comply with this request.

Scripture Readings 13th June 2021, 11th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B

Ezekiel has many chapters about Israel's failure to keep faith in God, culminating in the Babylonian exile. But God keeps his promises: He will restore his people to Israel. A remnant will survive and return to Zion, to build a renewed and perfect creation.

The Psalm extolls the Lord's just deeds: "the just" are so steadfast they appear rooted, flourishing "in the courts of our God", while "evildoers shall be scattered".

Paul has described some of his difficulties, accepting that "while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake". He encourages the Corinthians to have confidence in the Lord: whatever problems we face in our earthly lives, we look forward to making "our home with the Lord". Then our reward will be affected by our behaviour in this world.

In Mark's gospel Jesus describes the kingdom of God in parables. All around us are examples of transformation, seeds becoming unimaginable plants. We have got used to thinking of the kingdom of God as "somewhere else" – in "heaven" rather than on earth. But Jesus' parables do not suggest this, and in the Lord's prayer we ask every day that God's kingdom come "on earth, as it is in heaven". Do we mean it? What are we doing about it?

Psalm Response: **It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.**

(Ezekiel 17: 22-24; Psalm 91(92); 2 Cor 5: 6-10; Mark 4: 26-34)

Chris Oliver

Kitchen Makeover Update

I am pleased to say that we are ahead of schedule thanks to the plaster drying sooner than the time we had allowed for. The storeroom is complete and we have started moving stuff back in. The walls and ceiling are being painted and should be finished by this week end. The extra time we have will be very useful as with any project of this nature there will be many small extra jobs that crop up and it will enable us to make the final measurements and planning preparations for the locations of the kitchen equipment and the plumbing etc. The flooring is due to be installed by the contractor on Friday 18th June and Monday 21st June. During that time the kitchen will be strictly out of bounds as the floor will be

coated with bonding materials. During the rest of the week commencing 21st we plan to install the various fittings and equipment, so if all goes well we plan for the kitchen to be fully operational by Sunday 27th June, however, if we can operate by then depends on the Covid restrictions being lifted (don't blame me if they are not - blame Boris).

Many thanks to all those who have helped and contributed in so many ways with this extensive project

Cliff Snelling



Refugee Week 2021



As part of Refugee Week, Northampton Town of Sanctuary in conjunction with the University of Northampton is holding a series of **free to attend** virtual talks outlining the experience of those seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom.

Monday 14 June 2021, 2pm

A Refugee's Journey

Speaker: Gulwali Passarlay

Wednesday 16 June 2021, 2pm

How to build public support for refugee protection

Speaker: Emma Harrison, IMIX

Tuesday 15 June 2021, 2pm

An introduction/update to the City of Sanctuary movement

Speaker: Maggie Filipova-Rivers, City of Sanctuary

Friday 18 June 2021, 11am

Red Cross' support to Sanctuary seekers in

Northamptonshire and Leicestershire during the pandemic
Speaker: Eric Nkundumubano, Red Cross .

If you wish to attend any or all of these talks, please contact Nick Allen (nick.allen@northampton.ac.uk; 01604 892320).



On the left is the logo of NORES — the Northampton Religious Education Service — which exists to support Catholic education and formation across the Diocese of Northampton. Its remit is wide including the management of Schools and Academies and Catechesis, Adult Education and Religious Education in Schools. Under the authority of Bishop David Oakley it is led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell.

The logo depicts a mustard bush with a bird nesting in it. The tiny seed grows into a tree which provides a home and food for the birds.

NORES provides various opportunities for Adult Education; the courser for catechists starts this 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 13th July 2021, 7.30 pm – 8.30. To register please email admin@nores.org.uk.



Tuesday 13 July 2021, (7.30-8.30pm)

Mark and John and the Word of Life
'The Church draws her life from the Eucharist'
Pope St John Paul II

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)

SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021



28 th February	CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26 th Feb)
2 nd April	Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places
25 th April	Diocesan Priests' Training Fund
16 th May	Mass Media
20 th June	Day for Life
27 th June	Peter's Pence
11 th July	Apostleship of the Sea
19 th September	Home Mission Sunday
3 rd October	CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1 st October)
24 th October	Mission Sunday
7 th November	Bishop's Maintenance Fund
14 th November	Sick & Retired Priests' Fund