



The Catholic Parish of Saint Gregory the Great Northampton



PART OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON, REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 294951

OUR
VISION

**“A truly thriving Catholic community,
confidently and humbly proclaiming the
Good News of Jesus Christ.”**

OUR
VISION

An Ecological Conversion

At the heart of his encyclical, *Laudato si'* Pope Francis is calling for an 'ecological conversion'.

It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion", whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (*Laudato si'* §217)

It is important that this call is addressed to us, as Catholic Christians, because the encyclical as a whole is addressed to all men and women of goodwill, he says that he "would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home." (§3)

Many people 'of goodwill' have responded to the call to save our environment simply out of goodwill and a recognition that this is a vital issue. Pope Francis takes this a step further, into the realm of theology. As well as being clear to all but the most stupid that humanity is seriously damaging the planet, and that this must be stopped, as Christians, we need to realise that we have a moral duty to protect God's creation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. (*See Genesis 1:28-31*) Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation. (*see Pope St John Paul II, Centesimus Annus §37-38*)

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church §2415*)

In the 'Global Healing' film (Link on the parish website under 'VIDEOS' and on the parish Facebook page.) Dr Carmody Grey, assistant professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Durham

challenges us: "How many of us have gone to confession to confess the fact that we didn't recycle yesterday?"

Bishop John Arnold, in the same film makes the point that all of theology is connected. This, he says, if the great gift that Pope Francis is showing to us. What this means is that "sustaining a healthy relationship with creation is a vital dimension of our overall personal and communal conversion to Jesus Christ.

There is a great danger in thinking of 'conversion' as a 'one-off event'; when we became a Christian, when we became a Catholic, or some other major change in our way of thinking or living. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of conversion as "an uninterrupted task for the whole Church" (§1428).

One of our big tasks is what the Church calls the "New Evangelisation"; the re-awakening of the society of the 'developed world' to the truth of the Gospel. Someone once said: "I stopped going to Church when I saw a priest dropping litter in the street". That is a sad story, but one which shows that even small acts which we may not even consider as sinful can have a devastating effect.

We probably all have a hierarchy of priorities in our faith. Pope Francis is asking us to raise our concern for God's creation. In the 'Global Healing' film, Fr Sean McDonagh observes that in the past the Catholic Church had "nothing to learn from other species; the only thing we had to learn was our Bible and spiritual direction and things like that", and goes on to say that Pope Francis is speaking of a new spirituality within the Catholic Church. This is a spirituality that chimes in well with the secular movement for ecology and the care for our planet.

It is significant that many outside the Church are listening to Pope Francis in this, just as many are also seriously studying Catholic social teaching. It would be a strange irony if the Pope was more listened to by those outside the Church and by those within it!

It would be a wonderful thing if everyone who reads this, whether in the printed copy, by email or on our website could watch the video. The link is here:

<https://stgregory.org.uk/videos/>

It would be even more wonderful if, having watched it, we all made some serious resolution to make a positive change, and not just one positive change, but to begin a journey of changes to make a lighter footprint on our planet.

Notices of Interest

Congratulations to Aileen Hasdell celebrating her 100th Birthday on 19th September

Confession: Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Louis Daniel Sidney Pickering and
Tudor Ghiurcutor
who received Christian Baptism last week.
Please pray for them and their families.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

From 9.00 am to 12 noon on Thursdays, and then following Mass in the evening, until 8.30 pm.

CAFOD Corona Virus online petition: Out of love for our brothers & sisters please sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre: Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:
<https://cafod.org.uk/>
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

Bishop David kicks off Autumn webinar series: On 5th August Pope Francis called on the Church to reflect on our current situation. In response, the diocesan Pastoral Ministry Office is hosting a series of online webinars on Monday evenings through the autumn. We begin on 21st September with Bishop David reflecting on the last six months, and posing some key questions as we go forward. Other topics include reaching out to the needy, building community, prayer and spirituality, and catechesis. The webinars are free to attend, but you will need to register to receive the web link. For more information and to register, please go to <https://postlockdownchurch.eventbrite.co.uk>.

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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

Bible Alive for September 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. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

A 'Virtual' Pilgrimage of Reparation to Walsingham will take place on Sunday 27th September and will be led by Bishop Marcus Stock of Leeds. As you can imagine we are having to adapt to Covid-19 guidelines and so we have planned a 'Virtual Pilgrimage'. Bishop Marcus will be in Walsingham, God willing, but Covid-19 limitations result in the Shrine discouraging visits at weekend, therefore we are not running any coaches this year. Instead we will be offering an online participation which presents us with an opportunity to reach many more people than in previous years. We are also hopeful that the Relic Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be present in Walsingham. Online participation is through <https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/> or <https://www.youtube.com/WalsinghamCatholicTV>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 19th October, at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend to book your place.**

First Holy Communion — 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation - 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 21st November at 7.00 pm (Apologies for yet another change — this has been difficult!).

PARISH FINANCES

As we increase our activities, and as colder weather approaches so that we need to turn the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have managed to keep solvent through the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous.

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)**

Holy Communion and face masks: Instructions were recently given that the wearing of face masks was to become compulsory in churches; this has now come into force, and you should wear one if you are not exempt. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is now the law. However, you clearly cannot have your mouth covered while receiving Holy Communion! The Church's rule is that you consume the Host before you move away from the minister. Please remove your mask before being given the Host. Priest and Deacon wear face-coverings for your protection.

Becoming a Catholic: For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

Scripture Readings 13th September 2020, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

The Wisdom book, Ecclesiasticus, was written in Hebrew about 200 BC by Ben Sira, a Jewish sage. There are many allusions in the new Testament to the later Greek version. At a time of increasing pagan Greek influence, Ben Sira showed that Israel's religion was still a firm basis for moral living. He gives many practical examples, helping Christians of every age to apply moral truths to their own times. His strict condemnation of nursing anger and resentment is all too relevant for us today.

The psalm is a hymn of thanksgiving and tender piety for God's generous mercy – because of our frailty. How blessed we are that God "does not treat us according to our sins".

The last of our Sunday readings from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome emphasises that we belong to the community of all believers,

both those alive now – and in the future – and those who have died. Our lives have influence on others. Linking both to Sirach and Matthew in the next verse Paul says "Why do you pass judgement on your brother?"

In today's Gospel Sirach's advice to forgive is graphically illustrated: Jesus tells Peter we must always forgive. We are saved by forgiveness – ours as well as Christ's.

Psalm Response:

**The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.**

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 27:30-28:7; Ps 102(103): 1-4, 9-12 r.8; Rom 14: 7-9; Matt 18:21-35

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 96: *Living sustainably with creation: driving less and walking more so we have cleaner air to breathe, our chance to heal our human family and heal our common home.*

Tip No. 97: *Living sustainably with creation: small acts of kindness, picking up the phone to check on a friend or leaving a bag of groceries on the doorstep of someone who can't get to the shops. Truly becoming neighbours.*

Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew

Looking Forward

We are told that the present tightened restrictions are likely to last until Christmas, and maybe beyond. This has a major impact on our activities through the autumn and winter in a number of areas. We must seek the best way of continuing while not taking risks over the spread of the virus.

Sunday Mass

It is a great joy to see many people feeling confident to come each Sunday, and although the instruction is that the Mass should be as short as possible and without singing, it is still the source and summit of our Christian life, and the way in which Jesus himself told us to worship him.. It is important that we remain 'Covid-secure' by following the 'social distancing' regulations. The 'Sunday Mass obligation' remains lifted, and the Mass is put up on the parish website and the parish Facebook page, as is the homily (separately).

Daily Mass

We have good numbers attending weekday Mass; this is a great joy and an important part of our parish spirituality. There are some who prefer to come on weekdays rather than on Sundays as it is less crowded; all are welcome. The daily Mass is also made available on the website and Facebook.

Church Opening

The regulations regarding stewarding are likely to remain in force until the pandemic is past, and this does create a significant burden in terms of the requirement for stewards. The present reality is that few people are coming in to pray apart from at Mass. However, keeping the Church open as much as possible is important, and we do need

more people to volunteer to act as stewards if this is to be maintained. The duties are not difficult. Please email to Fr Andrew if you are able to help.

First Holy Communion preparation

This year's preparation course had to be interrupted, but plans are in place for those enrolled to complete their preparation and begin to receive Holy Communion. Those involved are being kept up-to-date with the plans. Next year's preparation group would be being asked to enrol in the very near future, and there will be information about this in the near future, but the delivery of preparation will have to be modified. Last year we began a programme in which the parents were the main catechists. As things have turned out, this was providential, as this can be more easily adapted to an on-line delivery.

Confirmation preparation

We have a date for the Confirmation of Saturday 21st November, and after that we will be enrolling for next year.

Bible Timeline and Bible Study

This will be resuming soon through 'Zoom'. For those unfamiliar with this on-line platform, the week after next there will be a series of get-togethers by Zoom; full details will be in next week's newsletter. There will be a foundation course running, as well as other courses, but this will be an opportunity for people who have not yet done a course to do so from the comfort of their own home!

Alpha and Evangelisation

We are planning to run an 'Alpha' course by Zoom; full details will be published later.



During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The September “Bible Alive” is now available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.

