



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

Christ is Risen — in Luke

All the Gospels record the Resurrection of Jesus and each of them tell of Jesus appearing to a variety of people. In the preaching of the first Christians, this was an invariable part of their message, including the evidence of the witnesses of his appearing. In the first reading for today we see an example of this.

Luke gives us two instances of Jesus’ appearing; the first is the well-known story of the road to Emmaus; today’s Gospel is the sequel to that story. Cleopas and his companion have returned to Jerusalem ‘full of joy’ having recognised Jesus in the ‘breaking of bread’, and realised that it was he who had explained the Scriptures as they had walked towards Emmaus.

Today we read of what must have been a bit of an anti-climax to them. They were expecting to deliver wonderful news, and were met with the response: “we know”! However, Luke does not record their feelings, and in any case, all this is overtaken by the appearance of Jesus in the room with them.

The first reaction of the eleven Apostles and their companions is one of ‘alarm and fright’ because they thought they were ‘seeing a ghost’, in spite of their having heard three witnesses speak of the resurrection.

Jesus greets them with the common greeting “Shalom” (Peace be with you), and then calms their fear. To prove that he is real and no ghost, he asks them for something to eat. They give him a piece of fish, which he eats in their presence. The fact that there was grilled fish in the room suggests that they were having a meal together when he arrived.

The meal at Emmaus has been clearly identified as having a Eucharistic significance. The memorable sentence that ‘he was known to them in the breaking of bread’ is a clear reference that the expression ‘breaking of bread’ in Acts (also written by Luke) was the early Church phrase to refer to the celebration of the Eucharist. That the meal followed on from a time of explanation of the Scriptures clearly indicates the structure of the Mass which continues to the present day: the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

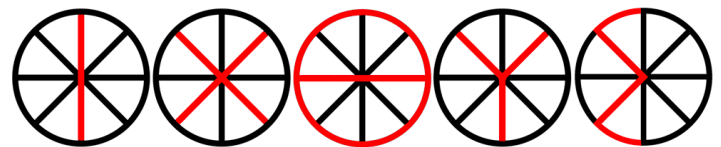
On the other hand, what took place in Jerusalem was not the same. No bread is mentioned, and Jesus was already there, the asking for food was to demonstrate that he was no ghost, but was truly risen.

The fish may have been simply literal; that is what they were eating at the time. However, Luke is a great story-teller, and mention of fish at the end of the Gospel might remind us of the mention of fish at the beginning, when Jesus is recruiting his apostles by the lakeside, and the fishermen, Peter and Andrew, James and John

were told that it was not fish that they would catch, but people. (*Luke 5:10*).

This is clearly a significant part of the Gospel narrative, and the significance of the fish was not lost on the early Church, as the logo of the fish became the first symbol of the Church, as the Greek letters making up the word for fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ) are made from an acrostic of Jesus (Ι) Christ (Χ) God’s (Θ) Son (Υ) Saviour (Σ).

In the early Church the five Greek letters in their capitalised form and superimposed on each other formed the shape of a round loaf of bread, given a Eucharistic significance to the fish, as well as having a missionary reference



Ι Χ Θ Υ Σ

Fish appear at another significant point in the Gospel; just before the recognition by Peter that Jesus is the Christ and the Transfiguration there is the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. This story also has a Eucharistic reference: ‘Jesus took the loaves, and looking up to heaven blessed them and broke them and gave them to his disciples’.

There are many accounts of meals in Luke’s Gospel, and they are occasions of revelations of truth and calls to discipleship. That is why the meal at the start of each Alpha session is so important. Sharing in ‘table-fellowship’ was one way in which Jesus drew people to himself, and through the Church, he continues to do this. Shared meals are ‘love-encounters’; the Mass being the supreme such encounter, but other shared meals, such as that at Alpha are pointers towards this ‘Magnum Mysterium’ (O Great mystery and wonderful Sacrament).

The Alpha system is not simply based on watching films and listening to recordings. It is, first, a time of encounter. It is where people who are curious about the Faith can encounter believers in an environment in which they will not be ‘preached at’ or in any way ‘brainwashed’, but can share ideas and ask questions. They can hear the experiences of others and share their own if they wish. It is where people can meet Christ in one another, and share a simple but delicious meal together in a context that looks forward to sharing in the great meal with Christ that we call the Mass.

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Ryah-Arthur Maresi
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Cards and items for First Communion and Confirmation are available. Red Communion ties are here & cost £6. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

Bible Alive for April and May is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church

Coming Events (for your diary):

Saturday 13th April: Table top sale for Gregory Care

Tuesday 16th April: Next Alpha course starts

Saturday 27th April: Pro-Life Life Chain on St Peters Way, 11.00 – 1.00

Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*

Friday 19th to Saturday 20th July: 40 Hours Adoration at St Gregory's

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)**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be Monday 27th May, 7pm, in the Sacristy. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023/4: All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

Confirmation in 2024: There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk for further information.

Next Alpha will be after Easter:

First session:	April 16th:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	April 23rd:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	April 30th:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 7th:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	May 14th:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 21st:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	June 4th:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	June 8th:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 11th:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 18th:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 25th:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	July 2nd:	What about the Church?

Tots @ St Gregory's: St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

Women in Ministry - The Gathering 3. Did you know that Northampton Diocese has a Women in Ministry group? We have our own web page: <https://northamptondiocese.org/women-in-ministry/> & we made a key contribution to the recent Diocesan assembly. We have been active for a number of years & want to invite the women of our Diocese to our next Gathering on June 8th at St Mary's Woburn Sands, 10am - 4pm. This is an opportunity to reflect on women in the Catholic Church, their calling & vocation, their gifts & ministries, their voice in the synod & a chance to listen, pray, share, & reflect. For more info, email helen.burgess@northamptondiocese.org. All welcome!

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10am-12 pm.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – 27th April**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

Fire Safety: Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on the trays under the places for candles and candles must not be stacked one on top of another.

Election on May 2nd: On Thursday May 2nd the hall will be in use as a polling station so that Cedar Road School does not have to close for the day. Please pray for wisdom for all voters on that day.

Care for our environment: Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1st to October 4th, and this has now become a celebration shared by other Christians as well. Within our own local area, it would be good if Christians could work together to try to bring about a greater understanding and respect for God's creation. Issues like clean air, fly-tipping and care of the green spaces (Abington Park, Eastfield Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Vale Park, Wilson's Orchard, Billing Road Cemetery). If anyone is interested in these, or other environmental issues, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

Special Thanks to Jesus Youth for the (much needed) new carpet in the Sacristy. The old carpet lasted over 40 years, but had developed a crease which had become a trip-hazard.

Pro Life Chain – Saturday 27th April 2024: Saturday 27th April, between 11am & 1pm, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. If you can join us or want more information, then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurie@btinternet.com

Diocesan Pilgrimages: There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8th June (leaving 8am sharp), and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23rd Aug to Friday 30th Aug. Booking details for both will follow shortly.

Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent	The Hope Centre
to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time	
to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	Gregory Care
<i>Through Lent and Eastertide:</i>	<i>CAFOD</i>
Ordinary Time until the end of August:	Refreshment Fund
September until the Harvest collection:	CAFOD
After harvest until the beginning of Advent:	The Bible Society



For Sale

Small plaques of the church, gift-boxed, artist hand-made, a limited number available in the repository.
£5 for Gregory Care.

Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:

Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war:

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

Sunday 14th April: 3rd Sunday of Eastertide, Year B

After Peter healed the man lame from birth, who had been begging at the Beautiful gate, the man joyfully walked with the Apostles in the Temple. At the portico of Solomon Peter addresses the crowds, emphasising that the man had been cured by the power of the God the Jews believed in, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's kingdom is already becoming visible.

Perhaps reflecting later antagonism between some Jews and Christians, Peter adds that it was "you", "men of Israel" who insisted on killing Jesus, declared innocent by Pilate. But, Peter says, they "acted in ignorance" so that God's plan would be fulfilled.

The Psalm begs God's aid and admonishes incredulous observers to put their trust in God.

Paul appointed presbyters to lead his young churches. Thirty years

later, John's community appears to have almost no structure. But there are problems: "many antichrists have come", and some members have left the community, perhaps misled by the small amount of moral teaching in John's Gospel. Paul's hierarchical model survived, but tension between structure and charism continues.

How strange the resurrected Jesus appears! The two disciples had recognised Jesus after he had left them in the inn on the way to Emmaus, but now they are frightened, thinking him a ghost.

Psalm Response: **Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.**
(Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19 ; Psalm 4; 1 John 2: 1-5; Luke 24: 35-48)

Chris Oliver

Stay Curious

We are told that we must love God with all our heart and with all soul and with all our mind and with all our strength. (*Mark 12:30*) Loving God with all our mind means that we have to apply our reason to our faith.

There are some who follow the calculations of Archbishop James Ussher which placed the act of creation on 22nd October 4004 BC. He was the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, and published his chronology in 1650, and was generally accepted by Protestants up to the 19th century, and still by some fundamentalist Creationists.

It was not only scientists who questioned the Ussher chronology, even in the protestant world theologians disputed his dating. The Catholic Church has never speculated on the age of the earth.

"The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man. These

discoveries invite us to even greater admiration for the greatness of the Creator, prompting us to give him thanks for all his works and for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers. With Solomon they can say: "It is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements. . . for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church §283*)

There are many opportunities for satisfying curiosity in this season of Mystagogia; the Alpha Course which starts on Tuesday 16th April and runs on Tuesday evenings on the dates listed opposite, which is suitable for everyone, and examines the basics of the Christian Faith. There is the Re: New series of meetings on Saturdays at the Cathedral Hall. Dates in May, June and July are listed on the front page. This coming Wednesday is a Zoom session on the Sunday readings for Eastertide, starting at 7.30 pm and lasting about an hour. To get the Zoom link, please email to Fr Andrew.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7.00 am on Friday 19th July until 11.00 pm on Saturday 20th July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.

Donorbox: St. Gregory's has signed up with Donorbox to enable people to make donations to the Church via a QR code. This is a safe & easy way of making a one-off donation without having to have cash on you!

If you have a smartphone, just point your camera at the QR code, click the link & the site will see you through the donation process. There is a larger version of this QR code in the Narthex area and in the hall for refreshment donations!



Bishop David is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org

Caspar

This system is being rolled out across the diocese. The only essential information is your name and email address, although your home address and telephone number are useful, and a photo always helps! To comply with GDPR, each adult person must fill in their own registration form.

I hope that this will improve our communication, but that depends on our data being correct and up-to-date. Please help us to do this.



Parish Registration

We will soon be using a new computer system to help us manage our parish better. It starts with us making sure that we have up to date contact information for all of our parishioners and so we would be grateful if you could complete the registration form by clicking on this QR code or by typing the link into your browser.

www.caspar.church/me?ID=56067



If you don't have an email address, please speak to the parish who can complete the form on your behalf.

Bridget Tuite RIP

The funeral Mass for Bridget Tuite will be on Monday 29th April at 11.00 am. May she rest in peace.

URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

Diocesan Bible Studies

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 Andrew Behrens,
Mgr Kevin McGinnell,
Deacon Peter Collins
Fr Allan Jones CRIC,

Sessions in 2024

Wednesday 31 January 2024,
Preparing for Lent

Wednesday 10 April 2024,
Celebrating Eastertide

Wednesday 5 June,
2 Corinthians in Ordinary Time Year B

Wednesday 11 September 2024,
The Letter of St James in Ordinary Time Year B

Wednesday 27 November, 2024,
Celebrating Advent and Christmas, Year C

Each session runs from 7:30-8:30pm and 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 mailing:
deaconpeter.collins@northamptondiocese.org

Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions.

Cathedral Foodstore

Preparation for First Holy Communion — Growing Up Catholic

Today at the 11.00 Mass we are welcoming those who will be in the First Holy Communion programme from St Gregory's parish this year. We welcome the children and their parents. As a mark of this important step in their family life, we are giving them a picture of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. There is a prayer on the back of the card which is in Italian, but translates:



O God, our Father,
who in your family
gave us a true model of life,
let the same virtues and love
flourish in our families,
so that
reunited in your home
we can one day enjoy
endless joy.
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen

We have not made definite plans for next year, but anyone who would like to join the team will be very welcome, there is no need for previous experience or any particular knowledge; all that is needed is a love for Jesus, a love for the Church and a willingness to work with children and their parents. This year all sessions are on Saturday afternoons and are held at Sacred Heart church near the Weston Favell shopping centre, but if next year we need to run parallel sessions, a decision will need to be made about when and where that would be. All helpers and leaders are required to have DBS clearance

A key part of our preparation is that parents/carers have a vital role in the process. They cannot just drop off their child and go shopping! The Baptism Rite calls parents the 'first teachers of their child in the ways of faith', and the Second Vatican Council restated the traditional teaching of the Church that it is the parents who have the primary responsibility for the Christian education of their children. "The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (*Vatican II Gravissimum Educationis* §3)

[DBS is the 'Disclosure and Barring Service', a government body which helps Voluntary Sector organisations to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain types of work especially involving children or vulnerable adults through access to criminal record information.]

Please pray this prayer with the intention for our First Holy Communion families.

The Ministry of Welcome

The Three Bees



Belong

Believe

Behave

Last week this diagram showed the traditional sequence but we saw that this does not accord with nature, where we belong to a family before we can know anything or have any idea about how to behave.

In the Synod agenda, we are asked to reach out to the marginalised, and almost by definition, they will have little or no understanding of a Christian way of life. Indeed, why should we expect anyone who has no faith in Jesus to follow his teaching?

Jesus did not impose conditions on those who followed him. He did not say that they could only follow him if they did this or stopped doing that. On the other hand, we know that many, when they got to know him, did change their life.

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**

Our task, as missionary disciples, is to invite people to come to get



to know Jesus. This is the main function of the Alpha course. It is an introduction to belonging by demonstrating that the family of Jesus, the family of the Church is a welcoming environment to be in.

Alpha is not the only way of doing this, but it is a tried and tested way, and although its origins were not in the Catholic Church, it is now being used more by Catholics than in any other denomination. It does not attempt to teach the whole of the Catholic Faith, nor does it deny anything we believe. It simply helps people to have a relationship with Jesus, and to know that they are loved by him, and that they belong. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit and the good example that we set.

Account Number: **46898093**
Account Name; **Northampton Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust**
Payment Ref; Parish Name/Area: **(St. Gregory's, Northampton)**

O God, our Father,
who in your family
gave us a true model of life,
let the same virtues and love
flourish in our families,
so that
reunited in your home
we can one day enjoy
endless joy.
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen