



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

Shield your upper lip

We have become familiar with wearing face-masks as a way of preventing the transmission of coronavirus, but in our first reading at Mass this week-end we hear of the prevention of transmission of infectious disease.

There are only two Sundays in the three-year cycle of readings that we read from the Book of Leviticus; it is mainly concerned with detailed instructions for the priests of the Old Testament, and the section from which today's reading is drawn is a description of the diagnosis of infectious skin diseases, generally under the term of 'leprosy', but embracing a range of conditions. It runs to 113 verses, of which we read only 5. It shows a sophisticated understanding of the spread of disease by droplet transmission; the shielding of the upper lip was the equivalent of wearing a face-mask.

The purpose of this law was the diagnosis of the condition, not with the healing of the ailment. The treatment was isolation, and if the patient had not died after a period of time and the symptoms disappeared, he could seek a new diagnosis and be pronounced to be healed. He was then required to make a ritual sacrifice for his healing. (*Leviticus 14:3-32; Mark 1:44*)

The diagnosis was primarily for the protection of the rest of the community, and this is very much akin to our dealing with Covid-19. Most people who get the disease are not seriously ill; the biggest danger is that they give the disease to someone else who does become ill or even dies. In fact, even now, treatments for Covid are limited. That is why the prevention of transmission is so important.

This understanding has become a 'mantra': "No one is safe until everyone is safe". That is why the process of vaccination must be global, and the idea of 'vaccine nationalism' is not just evil but also utterly stupid. Unless we want to isolate ourselves altogether and prevent all foreign travel and forbid all visitors to this island and to forgo all international trade, we need to control the spread of the disease across the whole world.

Isolationism and nationalism are great dangers in global society; dangers that have loomed large in the last few years. God is God of all the nations, continents and peoples; there is no other God and the pandemic's effects in Africa are as much God's concern as its effects in Britain. Equally the effects of climate change in Africa or South America are just as important as the effects here. Amongst those effects are the changes to the fall of rain in every part of the globe.

We are certainly seeing that change here, with what have been called 'once in a century' events occurring several times in a decade. The

other side of these changes is drought, and in many of the hotter parts of the world the rains have failed for several years, leading to starvation or migration.

The CAFOD Lent poster features a 23 year old man called Abdella who lives in the Afar region of Ethiopia, one of the hottest parts of the earth. The average daytime temperature is 40°C and the average annual rainfall in 10 to 20 cm. He spends ten hours each day, every day walking to and back from the nearest source of water. Thanks to CAFOD working with the Isle of Man Government, three villages in the area, with 7,000 people have been able to install solar-powered water pumps to irrigate their land and grow crops, which have brought business to the villages, and they are no longer reliant on aid.

Water shortage is a worldwide problem. The World Health Organisation states that one in three people around the world – over 2.2 billion people – don't have access to safe drinking water. Of people who live in rural areas, one in eight people don't have access to basic facilities like toilets, places to wash hands and drinking water.

It's important to remember that since 2000, 1.8 billion people have gained access to water.

But for Abdella's community and hundreds of millions around the world, climate change is making it more difficult just to stay alive. Rising temperatures, and less rain that falls in unpredictable seasons, will mean that water is scarcer with greater numbers of people looking for it.

Access to safe drinking water is one of the biggest challenges the region faces, with 70 per cent of Afari children deprived of access to water. Drinking water shortages are common because there are few surface water sources like ponds or streams in Afar, with many people reliant on shallow, traditional wells that are unreliable and often dry up during frequent droughts. When these sources dry up, Afari women and girls are forced to walk long distances just to find water for their families. This can leave them vulnerable to violence.

Water shortages and unsafe water sources have contributed to cholera outbreaks, increases in malnutrition as well as decreases in livestock productivity and other livelihoods.

While we face the hardship of the pandemic, many parts of the world face that and water shortage. We may be shielding our upper lip, but at least we can moisten it.

Can we, during this Lent make a significant contribution towards a reliable water supply for Abdella's village?

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for Lent 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: If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.00am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go. St. Patrick's Day and Easter cards are now available.

Being a Dynamic Catholic: It is planned that through Lent there will be regular talks on the parish website and Facebook page based on a book entitled "Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic" by Matthew Kelly. This could form part of a Lockdown Lent discipline.

COVID-19 Precautions: We are in lockdown, & as responsible members of our community, we obey the Government Regulations in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives & livelihoods. Now that we can return to Mass, we must continue to try to suppress the spread of the virus & support those who remain vulnerable.

Face masks: Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

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.

The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word The last of the three sessions is on Tuesday 16 February 2021, 7.30-8.30 pm: 'Many more began to believe in him because of his Word'(John 4:41) John's Gospel & The Season of Lent. Led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath, Adviser for Adult Faith Formation. Regrettably, this is at the same time as the first Alpha session, but is recorded and will be available to see afterwards.

Pro-Life issues: The Government is being pressured to make temporary approval of DIY abortions (both pills taken at home) permanent. They have launched consultations for England and Wales to see whether people are in favour of this. For the sake of the unborn and their mothers, please therefore respond to the Government consultations. The LIFE charity have put together a briefing on points to consider when answering the questions in the consultations. Click [here](#) to read the briefing.

SPUC: You could save a life! There are two simple ways in which you could be a life saver; firstly, please consider joining the Northampton Branch of SPUC, you would be helping to end the shame of abortion in this country and protecting women; secondly, if you are unable to become a member of SPUC, you could offer your support by joining the prayer team. All you would have to do is pray for Pro Life causes, either as a group, or on your own at home. If either of these things appeal to you and you want to join the fight to protect unborn children and their mothers, then please contact William Currie; wpcurrie@btinternet.com or 07393965643

To Catholic Universe and Catholic Times readers in the parish: at the moment you are unable to collect your paper at Mass, but you can get it delivered direct to your home every week, POST FREE. Please go to www.thecatholicuniverse.com or call them on 0161 820 5722 and they will arrange for you.
SPECIAL OFFER - 3 MONTHS: £25.00 — 12 Months: £99.00

DIGITAL COPY: 12 Months: £55.00

Right to Life: A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. The evidence that babies can feel pain in the womb, and during many abortions, highlights the humanity of the unborn child and provides another important reason to introduce legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion. Right To Life UK have set up an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP, and ask them to sign this motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. It only takes 30 seconds using this easy-to-use tool. This tool can be accessed by visiting the link below: www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church: The webinar series has been wonderful, and thank you to all who promoted it and came along throughout the series. We have had over 3,000 views! This is definitely something we will be looking to do again in the future. If you want to catch up with any you missed, all the videos are here: <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>

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.

Financial Support for Self-Isolation: Please see the following article regarding financial help available for those who are self-isolating; <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/health/coronavirus/how-apply-self-isolation-financial-support-now-available-across-northamptonshire-3004756>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2021: If you have a child who wishes to make their 1st Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at swatts49@outlook.com, who will note your name & the name & age of your child. This is still very much a first step as we are still unsure of how we can prepare the children at the moment; please be patient and, as soon as we possibly can, we'll give you more info about our programme & timings at which stage you can decide whether or not you wish to proceed.

Confirmation: Yet again we are thrown into confusion! We await more information. This continues to be difficult!

Parish Finances: As colder weather is here & we have the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent throughout 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)

Scripture Readings 14th February 2021, 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Leviticus, the third book of the Pentateuch, describes rituals used by the priests. Laws and rituals kept Israelites in the state of legal purity to which they were called, as a sign of their union with the Lord. A leper had to live apart in a dishevelled state, warning people to keep away. A cleansing ritual was specified for anyone cured.

This penitential Psalm celebrates the joy of confessing sins and knowing forgiveness. An omitted verse describes the misery of deferring confession.

Paul continues his theme of not placing obstacles which might hinder the spreading of the gospel. The Corinthians should eat whatever is put before them. They should not risk giving offence to their host, even if they suspect some food is ritually unclean by being offered to heathen gods before being sold in the market. But they should not eat

food that they are told has been offered to idols – because that would offend their informant's conscience.

Mark's gospel continues with another healing, this time Jesus shows enormous tenderness in insisting that – of course – he wants to heal the leper. And he does so by touching the unclean leper – so becoming unclean himself. Jesus makes very visible how much God wants to heal us.

Psalm Response:

**You are my refuge, O Lord;
you fill me with the joy of salvation.**

(Lev 13: 1-2, 44-46; Psalm 31(32): 1-2,5,11; 1 Cor 10:31-11:1; Mark 1: 40-45)

Chris Oliver



is there more to life than this?

Tuesday evenings
Beginning 16th Feb for 11 weeks

Your greatest adventure awaits...

To register, please email: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

Explore Life Faith Meaning

ALPHA COURSE

Alpha Online

Alpha

Alpha on Line!

Do you have questions about life? Do you want to grow in your faith in this difficult time? Do you want to connect with others?

Why not try Alpha online?

Or maybe you know someone who has questions? Maybe they wouldn't want to come to Church but they may feel comfortable joining an online course?

We really encourage you to invite them to Alpha online! Alpha is an 11 week course where people can explore the big questions of life.

We are beginning our first Alpha online this term on Tuesday evenings starting on 16th February at 7.30pm.

If you have never done Alpha or have been unable to join us because of, for example, childcare commitments in the evenings, this may be the perfect opportunity for you.

Dates:

16th and 23rd February, 2nd, 16th and 23rd March.
6th, 13th, 20th and 27th April, 11th and 18th May.
Retreat day: Sat 17th April

To receive the zoom code please sign up online

(<https://stgregory.org.uk/alpha>) or email Maria Heath:
maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk



Why 2021 must be a year of transformation

As the host of two major international conferences, the British government has a crucial role to play in 2021. In the summer, Britain will host the G7 annual meeting where the leaders of the seven richest countries will gather to discuss how to rebuild after the pandemic. This will be followed by the UN 'COP26' climate talks taking place in Glasgow in November, where world leaders will come together to agree how they will work towards ending the climate crisis.

What Faith action are we going to take?

As Catholics, we are called not to stay silent and not to be passive. This is why **Reclaim Our Common Home** is a call to action! It's a call to participate both individually and collectively in rebuilding a more dignified and sustainable world after the pandemic.

To do this we need to:

RECLAIM nature so that everyone can breathe clean air and be protected from the threat of climate disasters.

RECLAIM the world's land and resources so they are more fairly distributed and all our brothers and sisters around the world can live in dignity.

RECLAIM power so that everyone can be involved in decision making and have control over their own lives.

As the eyes of the world will be on Britain this year, it is vital that we all come together to raise our voices and ensure that our government listens.



SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

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

