



# 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

## Like shoots of the olive

The psalm for today is one which is often used at weddings, and speaks of family life, describing children as “shoots of the olive around your table”. The preceding psalm in the Bible is even more specific:

Yes, children are a gift from the LORD,  
a blessing, the fruit of the womb.  
Indeed, the sons of youth  
are like arrows in the hand of a warrior.  
Blessed is the warrior  
who has filled his quiver with these arrows!  
He will have no cause for shame,  
when he disputes with his foes in the gateways.

*(Psalm 126:3-5, Greek numbering, 127:3-5 Hebrew numbering)*

Anthony Trollope, the author of the ‘Barchester’ novels has a character, Mr Quiverfull, a clergyman with 14 children.

However, today a large family is not always seen as a blessing, although a beautiful series on television, “Our Yorkshire Farm” shows the life of a family with nine children.

More seriously, children are not always seen as a gift from God; sometimes seen as a ‘right’, and worse, sometimes seen as a problem or, worse still, as a disaster.

Humanity, in its pride, has sought to control everything in our environment. We are, however, learning a severe lesson through this pandemic, that our ability to control is limited. We may have found a vaccine, but it is not promised to be 100% effective, and if the virus mutates, may then not be effective at all. The effects of climate change are showing us how sometimes what we think to be advances can sometimes have unforeseen adverse consequences. Humanity wants to control birth and death and everything in between. As people of faith, we may well ask “what about after?”

Another psalm says:

O LORD, my heart is not proud,  
nor haughty my eyes.  
I have not gone after things too great,  
nor marvels beyond me.  
Truly, I have set my soul  
in tranquility and silence.  
As a weaned child on its mother,  
as a weaned child is my soul within me.  
O Israel, wait for the LORD,  
both now and forever.

*(Psalm 130, Greek numbering 131, Hebrew numbering)*

The sentiment of that psalm seems to be diametrically opposite to the mood of present society. As Shakespeare expresses it in the Scottish play, we have a “vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself and falls on the other” side. How often does that which is described as ‘world-beating’ turn out to promise much and deliver little. The ‘vaulting ambition’ of mankind to control everything is looking more like a fallen rider in the face of so many uncontrollables. The recent earthquake in Izmir (*Biblical Smyrna: see Apocalypse 2:8-9*) shows one force of nature that humanity cannot tame. The final verse of the psalm offers us the only solution: “wait for the Lord”, or as the Revised Standard Version translates: “Hope in the Lord”.

During this lockdown we are told only to make essential journeys; to work, for medical help and the like. However, our government thinks that a ‘one-way trip to Switzerland’, to the euthanasia clinic, is ‘essential’. Similarly, it thinks that providing self-administered medical abortion is essential. (See <https://www.spuc.org.uk/Get-Involved/Campaigns/Tell-the-Truth-DIY-Abortion>)

Last Monday, in the final webinars on the Post Lockdown Church, Fr Matthew Nunes spoke of the Vatican COVID-19 commission that Pope Francis had set up, with the mandate to “prepare the future”.

“The COVID Vatican commission is trying to answer to the reality we’re living and preparing the future,” said Father Augusto Zampini, one of the heads of the commission. “**Preparing the future** is different from preparing *for* the future: That implies the future is already determined and we must buy lifesavers because it’s going to be terrible.”

“Preparing the future”, he said, “means to acknowledge that things look grim, but since it’s not set in stone, it’s worth looking for economic models that will help humanity out of the ongoing crisis — not by going back to a world of inequalities led by an economy that kills, but by creating a fairer world.”

Fairness must include giving a fair chance to the unborn, and we must hold governments to account in their exercise of fairness.

However, it has been said that countries get the government they deserve, and our real challenge is not actually to change the mind of governments. Our real challenge is to change the minds of the people of the world, and of our country in particular. While the population at large does not care about God, it will not care about his commands.

Our real challenge is one of evangelisation, and at the heart of this is understanding that God’s overwhelming love for us, for humanity, is what must come first. If we can reveal this truth to the world, then the truth of the psalms becomes clear, as does the value of human life.



# Notices of Interest

**An Important Notice Regarding the Celebration of Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** We are instructed that there will be no public Masses until at least 3<sup>rd</sup> December; however, Mass will continue to be said privately, daily, and this will be on the parish website and our parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>. The church is open every day from 9.00 am until 10.30 am; thanks to an generous anonymous donation, the heating will be on! On Thursdays there is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during this time.

**Gift Aid Envelopes:** Although we are not allowed to celebrate Mass, the Church will still be open daily from 9am until 10.30am for private prayer. **It would be very helpful if you could bring any green envelopes in during this time** and place them in either the CAFOD box by the office door (at the back of the Church) or in the candle money box to the left of the foyer door. Thank you!

**Repository:** We have a stock of Calendars, diaries and Christmas cards available. If you wish to buy any, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.30am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go.

**Counters:** As we are now, once again, in lockdown, counting will cease until such time as we are cleared to have public services again. Hopefully the next count will be on 9<sup>th</sup> December!

**Bible Alive** for November 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.

**Prayer Course:** Are you interested in finding out more about prayer? Whether you're new to it or whether you've been praying for years, there's always more to experience. Join us for the prayer course on zoom from Thurs 22 October, 8.00 to 9.30 pm, then every 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at the same time. To register & receive zoom details please email Maria: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

**St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.** If you have a child due to start primary school in September 2021, St Gregory's are welcoming parents to visit the school and see it in action. Contact 01604 403511 to arrange a visit. Closing date for place applications is 15th January 2021 at 5pm.

**The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).** of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish.

**Face masks:** Wearing face masks are 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.

**Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church:** Last week's session was presented by Fr Matthew Nunes, and by Bishop David. Fr Matthew gave a beautiful presentation on the vision of Pope Francis through the coronavirus and shared how synodal values underlay the Synod process in Liverpool. Bishop David responded to this with his own sense of how hope and being a church for the poor lies at the heart of what we do. 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, and if you have any ideas of speakers you'd like to hear, let me know. Distance is no issue with zoom. 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.

**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.

**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>

**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/>

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

**Baptism Preparation:** Please contact Deacon Michael direct (01604) 647750, E-mail: [mvf@btinternet.com](mailto:mvf@btinternet.com) for information.

**First Holy Communion 2020:** We are happy to announce that enrolment for next year's programme for any child wishing to make their First Holy Communion who is in school year 3, 4, 5 or 6 will take place soon. The enrolment will be on line in December, so watch this space! At the moment we can't give any more details of how or when the preparation will take place but rest assured, it will!

**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 need to turn the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept 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)**

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

**Tip No. 112 Living sustainably with creation:** when we plant some spring bulbs, make a comfort food meal, arrange an ADVENT wreath or volunteer at Church we shine a light in dark times. Thank You

**Tip No. 113 Solidarity with the Poor:** Let's look for opportunities to say "Thank You" and be the grateful receiver. Let's shine our Light!

**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.

**Please pray for the soul** of Peter Archer, son of Harry and Mary Archer, who died in the Feast of All Saints, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020. May he rest in peace.

# Scripture Readings 8th November 2020, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

The Book of Wisdom was written in Greek, probably in Alexandria during the century before Christ. It seeks to strengthen faith by recalling the ways in which God rewards his people. But our just God also punishes individuals who act unjustly. We must learn wisdom to live justly in accord with God's justice, and so imitate and be drawn into the life of God.

The Psalm expresses our homesickness for God's sanctuary, our true home, confident that God will help us overcome all our enemies. Good advice: when our minds are empty, as at night – fill them with thoughts of God.

The parousia, when Christ will return – or be revealed in glory – was expected almost daily by the early Christians. But some believers had

already died, so Paul reassures the Thessalonians that they will not “miss out” – they will join everyone else in the resurrection of the dead. Two thousand years later we may now see the parousia at the end of time being anticipated by Jesus revealed to us in every Mass.

Matthew's gospel links the two readings together: we must live justly every moment of our lives so that we may be ready when the Lord calls us to him. We cannot rely on a last chance to repent.

Psalm Response:

**For you my soul is thirsting,  
O God, my God.**

(Wisdom 6:12-16; Ps 62:2-8 r.2; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Matt 25:1-13)

*Chris Oliver*

## Statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

We obey the Government Regulations in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives and livelihoods.

It is important to recognise that these Regulations are not an attack on religious belief. However, they do demonstrate a fundamental lack of understanding of the essential contribution made by faith communities to the well-being, resilience and health of our society.

At this difficult moment, we ask that, as a Catholic community, we make full use of our churches as places of individual prayer and sources of solace and help.

### Daily Prayer

We must sustain each other in our patterns of prayer, joining a national shared moment of prayer **each day at 6 pm**, and observing the Vigil of Christ the King (21 November) as a day of prayer for the ending of this pandemic.

## 6.00 pm. Daily Prayer

In union with the Church of England and other Christian denominations, we are asked to join in daily prayer during this lockdown, and daily intentions are suggested. We have a tradition of saying the Angelus at 6.00 each evening. We could make these prayers after saying the Angelus:

### **Sunday:**

Family, friends, and loved ones;

### **Monday:**

Schools and colleges, children, and young people;

### **Tuesday:**

The elderly, those who are isolated and vulnerable;

### **Wednesday:**

Businesses, the workplace, and economic wellbeing;

### **Thursday:**

The NHS and other key workers;

### **Friday:**

National and local governments;

### **Saturday:**

All who are grieving, those suffering with physical and mental health.

### **A Prayer to say each day this week**

Loving Father God,  
be with us in our distress;  
be with our families, friends, and neighbours,  
our country and our world.  
Give health to the sick,  
hope to the fearful,  
and comfort to mourners.  
Give wisdom to our frontline and key workers,  
insight to our Government,  
and patience to us all.  
Overcome disease with the power of your new life,  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus**

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.

### **Message from Bishop David:**

**The God who Speaks:** As we know, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales declared this year 2020 as: "THE GOD WHO SPEAKS: A YEAR OF THE WORD" and chose the theme in line with the spirit of the document, *Verbum Domini*. This initiative will be continued through 2021, not least because of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word**

A Series of 3 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 Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath is Adviser for Adult Faith Formation

**Tuesday 17 November 2020**, (7.30-8.30 pm) Preparing the Way for the Lord. Mark's Gospel & The Season of Advent  
**Tuesday 19 January 2021**, (7.30-8.30 pm) 'He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures' (Lk 24:45)<sup>V.L.</sup><sub>SEP</sub> The importance of God's Word for Christian identity & everyday living  
**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  
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 Once you booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions.



## SECOND COLLECTIONS

13<sup>th</sup> September

4<sup>th</sup> October

11<sup>th</sup> October

18<sup>th</sup> October

15<sup>th</sup> November

29<sup>th</sup> November

13<sup>th</sup> December

20<sup>th</sup> December

Holy Places

CAFOD

Peter's Pence

World Mission

World Communications

Day for Life

Home Mission

Sea Sunday

