



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

St Paul, Evangelist

Pope Francis is continuing his weekly audience talks on the importance of evangelisation, and each week the audience begins with a passage of Scripture. On 29th March he began with a reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians:

I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, ‘the one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy’. And they glorified God because of me.
(*Galatians 1:22-24*)

The conversion of St Paul was not just a momentous occasion in his own life; it was momentous for the Church. Before that day he was an enthusiastic defender of the Law of Moses and the Tradition of Jewish faith and practice. But from that day on, his enthusiasm switched to faith in Jesus. Pope Francis uses the word ‘zeal’ which not a word in common usage in modern English. It carries a meaning of more than just enthusiasm, but commitment, passion, determination, dedication; almost single-mindedness for the cause. Zeal was part of the nature of Saul of Tarsus, and after his conversion, that same zeal was applied to his new-found faith in Jesus.

He was a man who was zealous about the law of Moses for Judaism, and after his conversion, this zeal continued, but to proclaim, to preach Jesus Christ. Paul loved Jesus. Saul — Paul’s first name — was already zealous, but Christ converts his zeal: from the Law to the Gospel. His zeal first wanted to destroy the Church, whereas after, it builds it up. We might ask ourselves: what happened, that passed from destruction to construction? What changed in Paul? In what way was his zeal, his enthusiasm for the glory of God, transformed?

The conversion was not caused by a new idea in his mind nor by some clever argument — it was caused by his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Pope Francis wants to emphasise this point: it is the encounter with the Lord that changes a life.

It was Saul’s encounter with the risen Lord that transformed his entire being. Paul’s humanity, his passion for God and his glory was not annihilated, but transformed, “converted” by the Holy Spirit. The only one who can change our hearts is the Holy Spirit. And it was so for every aspect of his life. Just as occurs in the Eucharist: the bread and wine do not disappear, but become the Body and Blood of Christ. Paul’s zeal remains, but it becomes the zeal of Christ. It changes direction, but the zeal is the same.

Our gifts and talents are given to us, and whatever faith we may have does not change that, but may well change how we use them. The change that comes from being in a relationship with Jesus is first of all internal.

To become Christian is not to apply make-up that changes your face, no! If you are Christian, your heart changes, but if you are Christian [only] in appearance, this will not do ... made-up Christians will not do. True change is of the heart. And this happened to Paul.

We seek to deepen our understanding of our faith *because* of our relationship with Jesus. A deep knowledge of the Bible, of theology, of the life of the Church — none of these things mean anything without that underlying relationship with Jesus which is the true foundation of our faith.

Studies are useful but they do not generate the new life of grace. Indeed, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola says: “For it is not knowing much, but realizing and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies”
(*Spiritual Exercises, Annotations, 2, 4*).

Over and over again in the Gospels, it is the meeting with Jesus that brought about change in people’s lives. One thing that is clear from the stories of the trials of Jesus by Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate is that they did not **know** Jesus in any real way.

We are about to celebrate the coronation of our new king in England, but most of us will never have met him and have no personal relationship with him. Whatever our opinions on the monarchy are, we are subject to the king’s laws, keep the king’s peace and recognise him as our ‘head of state’. This is completely different from our relationship with Jesus. Our keeping Jesus’ laws, our abiding in his Jesus’ peace and recognising him as Christ the King derive from our personal relationship with him. We may not be invited to Buckingham Palace, but we have a daily invitation to dine with Jesus. We cannot pick up the telephone and have a conversation with the king of England, but in our prayer we are invited into a conversation with Jesus any time we want.

Pope Francis asks us to look into our own life. We have celebrated the joy of Easter, and recognised Christ risen from the dead. If he truly is in our heart, we too are risen. This is not an external reality; something that has happened to someone else, something that we observe from the outside. Rather, it is internal, and, like Saul of Tarsus, we are changed people; changed by that relationship with Jesus which inspires our life and directs our actions.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 29th March 2023

Notices of Interest

Car Park Safety: Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish and the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass - all stock is marked, so an easy task! Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com. PS: There are still some Diaries available.

The repair of the Crucifix outside the Church: It was a year ago that the crucifix outside the Church was replaced after repairs were done, and a generous donation was given by members of the Indian community. This was more than the actual cost of the repair. Many thanks for the additional money given which had helped us through the rising costs of the year.

Church Heating: Weekday Mass is now back in the church but Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

Thomas Becket Catholic School have a number of job vacancies, please look on their website for details.

Fire Safety – Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **MUST NOT** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be at 7pm, Mon. 24th April 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: Congratulations to all children who have enrolled on the First Holy Communion programme. You will now have all the dates of sessions. Please try to attend them all, and please enjoy the course!

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

Diocesan Mass for the Sick: Holy Family Langley, Slough SL3 7UD. Sat 22nd April, 3pm. Everyone welcome in person, or via our livestream. Can you help a housebound person, or someone in hospital or in a care home to join us online? Our YouTube channel works on smart TVs and iPad/tablets as well as on computers: holyfamilychurchlive.com. The Mass will be available afterwards as a recording.

Pro Life Chain: On Sat. 29th April, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. This act of silent witness is to remember the millions of lives lost to abortion since the Abortion Act 1967. It will take place between 11am & 1pm. Please consider joining us at this important event. We will stand together to proclaim the pro-life message. Abortion is a tragedy for babies, Mothers, Fathers, and society as whole. We have a moral duty to speak out against the horror of abortion. If you can join us or want more information, please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

Are You Interested in the Diaconate? If so, there will be an information morning as follows: Sat. 13th May, 10am - 12.30pm, St. Mary's RC Church, 82 West Street, Dunstable, LU6 1NY. Entitled: 'Opportunity to find out more about the diaconate in our Diocese.' Please contact Fr. Tony on 01582 662710 for more details.

Tots @ St Gregory's has restarted: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

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

Divine Mercy holy hour: Divine Mercy holy hour will take place at the Shrine of our Lady of Perpetual Succour on Sunday 16th April at 3pm.

Gregory Care Thank you so much to those who donate toiletries for your great response this week. Some weeks our supplies are really low but then thanks to your generosity we can manage to give every family (now over 60) toiletries along with their food bag. Don't forget we have gift certificates for the Cathedral Food Store if you need a charity gift for Easter!

Choir notes: Practice Thursday (20 April) after evening Mass: 7:45 – 9:00 pm. Come and join us as we strive to make our liturgy more inspiring. *Alec*

Missio / Red Box: In last week's newsletter, Father Andrew mentioned how wonderfully generous you were in the last calendar year and the one before that by your donations and, hopefully, prayers for the Missions. Donations for this year have been coming in regularly: God bless you all for that. New supporters are more than welcome. Some free magazines, envelopes and red boxes are available at the back of church. The current magazine features encouraging news about large numbers training for the priesthood in 5 seminaries: India (88), Kenya (329), Malawi (110), Nigeria (837) and Sri Lanka (190). Last Maundy Thursday, a lady gave my daughter a weighty bag of coins but there was no name on it. This gift was inside a cream carrier bag originating from "Spring Lane – A Sure Start Children's Centre". For my records, I would like to know WHO made this offering if only to return a pair of black woolly gloves that were inside the bag but don't really fit me. *Alec*

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)**

The Universe Catholic Weekly Online Newspaper: In order to keep high standards going and maintain a strong weekly Catholic voice at a time when it is much needed in the world, please consider taking out a subscription. Order your Digital 2 weeks free introductory offer by emailing michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk.

Prayers for Ukraine: Please continue to pray for an end to the war in Ukraine:

**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**

Scripture Readings 19th April 2020, Second Sunday of Easter Year A

Between Easter and Pentecost, readings from the Old Testament are replaced by the Book of Acts, about the beginnings of the Church as the Holy Spirit continues Christ's work on earth. Today Luke describes the early believers' close-knit community, holding their resources in common, and practising their Jewish faith before meeting in their homes for Eucharist.

More verses from the psalm used for the Easter Masses, rejoicing at the coming of the king.

This year the second readings during Eastertide are from the First Letter of Peter, the only time this letter is read on Sundays. Written from Rome to the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor. God gives us a new birth and a hope based on the resurrection. We must try as good citizens to maintain Christian standards amid pagan people. Suffering can purify our faith, enabling us to imitate Christ more. God cares for us while we look forward to

our inheritance in heaven.

This first week of Easter ends with the first ending of John's Gospel. Jesus appears twice to the apostles, sending them out to forgive sins. After doubting without seeing, Thomas utters the most complete expression of faith. The brief accounts of Jesus' ministry are that we may "believe that Jesus is the Christ, and "have life in his name".

Psalm Response: **Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.**

(Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 117(118); 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31)

Chris Oliver

Alpha resumes on April 18th 2023 — This Tuesday

This week's Alpha theme and the front page article based on Pope Francis' address at his General Audience are closely related. Faith in Jesus and love for Jesus are two sides of the same coin. We believe **in** the person we love; not just believe Jesus, but believe **in** Jesus, which means completely trust him in all things. We can know that we believe when we know that we love, and we can only truly love a person we know. However faith is not simply binary (either a person believes or he doesn't), and we can pray with the father of the epileptic child "I do believe, help by unbelief" (*Mark 9:24*) and our participation in the Sacramental life, prayer and the Christian community helps our faith to grow.

First session:	March 14 th 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21 st 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28 th 2023	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18 th 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25 th 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2 nd 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9 th 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12 th /13 th 2023	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16 th 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23 rd 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6 th 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13 th 2023:	What about the Church?

Gregory Care

Don't be disappointed if your invitation from the palace hasn't arrived!

*On Monday 8th May
you are invited to join in the
Coronation Big Lunch
at St Gregory's Church.*

There will be a shared table and extra goodies, games for children and adults to join in. Also there will be a fancy crown parade which we hope lots of you will take part in (the only criteria is that these should be made from recycled or repurposed materials) Watch out for the posters to register your interest and anything you could bring for the shared table (they will be around next week) This is not a fundraising event, there is no entrance fee and all games will be free to enter. This is just an opportunity for our community to get together and have a good time. We just need to know if you intend to join us.



eden project COMMUNITY LINK



Thank you again for your generosity

Fr Andrew is very grateful to you for your kind and generous gift at Easter, and for the love and kindness that you continue to show to him. May God bless you.

Divine Mercy Sunday

The Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Great Billing.

Divine Mercy Holy Hour

This Sunday; 3.00 pm – 4.00 pm

All welcome



Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham: 10th June:

A coach will leave from St. Gregory's at 8am on Saturday 10th June, leaving Walsingham at about 5.00pm. Cost £15 per person (payable in advance). Please see poster for full details. To book, please speak to Caryll in the Office, or add your details to the list in the Lobby area and see one of the Clergy to pay.