



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

Bring your own Booze!

This is not a reflection on recent news stories, about which opinions may differ, and about which the outcomes are yet to be seen.

This is about a wedding reception which took place nearly 2000 years ago. It is dangerous to read back into the story which we hear in our Gospel today the traditions of present day wedding receptions, even those of present-day Jewish weddings. There is some evidence that in those days guests were expected to make a contribution to the festivities, in fact to “bring your own booze”.

Whether or not that is the case, we are faced with the possibility of a social disaster, or, at least, the subject of gossip and a cause of shame, and it would seem that Mary was attuned to the situation and was aware of the risk. This is the first indication that Mary makes requests to her Son, and therefore that asking her prayers is a valuable thing to do.

Maybe we can read into this also a commentary of the state of affairs at the time. We noted last week that the formerly powerful and proud nation of Israel had fallen to a low ebb, and was now an unimportant part of the vast Roman Empire. Not only politically powerless, but also its religion had become corrupted, and divided. We know of three sections of Judaism at the time, the rich and powerful Sadducees who ran the temple and collaborated with the Romans; the Pharisees who studied the teachings of the Scriptures but were more concerned with their detailed observance, but not with mercy and charity, and the Essene community which detached itself from mainstream Jewish life and sought personal holiness in the caves surrounding the Dead Sea. We noted the words of the psalm:

“We see no sign, nor is there a prophet; we have no one to tell us how long it will last” (*Psalms 74:9 or 73:9*)

The Gospel has already shown us the prophet, and today we will see the first of the ‘signs’. How long will this last? The ‘hour’ has not come yet (*John 2:4*), but today we hear the first mention of it. There is not long to wait! Three years later, Jesus will say:

“The hour has come” (*John 17:1*)

This story points us forward in the Gospel in another way: When John tells us that the changing of water into wine was the first ‘sign’ that Jesus gave, he is inviting us to read on to find out about other signs. This story therefore acts as a link between the chronological narrative which began with John the Baptist announcing the coming of Jesus (“There stands among you one whom you do not know”) on the first day (*John 1:19-28*), through a counting of days until ‘the third day’ (*John 2:1*). Some commentators see in this a complete week of seven days, and therefore completing this part of the Gospel. If so, then, he has called his closest disciples, and with them, he goes to a wedding feast.

As well as concluding that section of the Gospel narrative, it also opens the next, which is known as the ‘Book of Signs’. In this we hear of six specific miraculous events; the first is the turning of water into wine, and the second, also at Cana is the healing of the son of an official (*John 4:46-54*). The third is at Jerusalem, where Jesus heals a man at the pool of Bethzatha, which leads on to conflict with the Jewish authorities because it happened on the Sabbath (*John 5:2-18*), the fourth is the feeding of the 5,000 (*John 6:1-14*). The fifth is the healing of a man who had been blind from birth (*John 9:1-38*) and the sixth is the raising of Lazarus (*John 11:1-44*). The ‘Book of Signs’ concludes with chapter 12, which also acts as a transition to the Passion narrative, heralded by the opening words of chapter 13: “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come”. (*John 13:1*)

There is a seventh sign. This is to be found in the concluding chapter of the Gospel, where Jesus leads the Apostles to a miraculous catch of fish (*John 21:4-14*). Like most of the other signs, it leads on to a narrative, and these narratives form important pieces of Jesus’ teaching. At the last of these Peter is given the pastoral care of the Church, now exercised by his successor; at the raising of Lazarus we hear the teaching of Jesus that he is the Resurrection and the Life (*John 11:25*) and the demonstration that Jesus is master even of death itself. The giving of sight to the man born blind is a pointer to spiritual blindness, particularly in the Pharisees (*John 9:40*). The feeding of the 5,000 leads on to the teaching on the Eucharist (*John 6:25-70*). The controversy after the healing of the man at Bethzatha includes a criticism of the Jews of Jesus’ time for their lack of understanding. “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” (*John 5:39-40*). The two signs at Cana do not lead on to narratives, but are signs of the power of Jesus over material things and sickness.

We need to read about these signs in the context of the words at the end of chapter 20:

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name.” (*John 20:30-31*)

It comes as no surprise, then that our Gospel passage today ends: “He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him”.

St John, the great evangelist now encourages us to be missionary disciples.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for January & February is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Chester Brian Joseph Hollowell
And Ezra Gene Bradshaw
Who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass. 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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 21st February, 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: There will be six 'in-person' sessions preparing for first Reconciliation, both at Sacred Heart church, Weston Favell from 3.00 pm until 5.00 pm on Saturdays, 4th and 11th December before the Christmas break. Those preparing on-line will receive emails with what they need. After Christmas there will be sessions on January 15th, 22nd and 29th and on February 5th.

Confirmation in 2022: The next Confirmation programme will be announced soon, but there will be a time of reflection before any definite plans are made. Please keep looking at this space where information will appear.

Food Parcels: Please get in touch with Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Choir Matters: practices are on Fridays 1:45 – 3:00 pm starting Feb 4. (Ash Wed is Mar 2): Mar 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 1 and 8 as we prepare for Easter (Apr 17). *Alec*

Parish Finances: Continued thanks for the wonderful generosity that you are showing to the parish.

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)**

Courses for Readers: The Bible Timeline course continues on Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. We will be moving to the Books of the Kings. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

The Year of Luke: After this Sunday, most of the Gospel readings at Mass will be from St Luke, and on Tuesday of this week there is an introduction to Luke on a Zoom presentation, 7.30 – 8.30 pm, There is 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 or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1) Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom session

Tots @ St Gregory's: TINY TOTS will re start on Tuesday 11th January. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year, if you have charge of a pre school child, from 9:30- 11:30 on a Tuesday morning!

We Now Have Heating Again! Please, please, please can we all help to keep the heat in by closing the outside doors, and not leaving them open.

LUX Pilgrimage: Nymo have had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Lux pilgrimage this year.

Gregory Care update on toiletry donations: Thank you to everyone who has donated toiletries to be sent out with food bags from the cathedral.

For your Diary — Moveable Feasts this year:

Ash Wednesday	2 nd March
Good Friday	15 th April
Easter Day	17 th April
Ascension Day	Thursday 16 th May
Pentecost Sunday	5 th June
Corpus Christi	19 th June
40 Hours Devotion	24 th – 25 th June

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

The Net Charismatic Prayer Group. A new prayer group will commence meeting on Wednesday 19th January 2022 at 7.30pm to 9pm in the prayer room of The Sacred Heart Church Hall, Weston Favell. The Net will meet every first and third Wednesday of the month. Everyone is welcome!

Northampton Diocese Vacancy: For all info on vacancies, please go to northamptondiocese.org/jobs/ or email hadmin@northamptondiocese.com.

Pivotal Players: Last Monday we began the series of sessions on 'Pivotal Players' with St Francis of Assisi. This week the session will look at St Thomas Aquinas, who was foundational in the development of Christian theology as well as in the development of Western philosophy. The Acts course will be delayed until the state of the pandemic is clearer as it is not easy to socially distance in the Sacristy. It will be on Tuesday mornings after Mass beginning when it is safe to do so. On Tuesday evenings, starting on 11th January, there will be training for Alpha leaders and on Wednesday evenings the Zoom Bible Timeline is continuing. Please email Fr Andrew for the Zoom links.

Seeking Assistance: Lady in Abington, new to our parish looking for persons to help her get to either 11.00 or 12.00 Mass and/or social occasions at St Gregory's. She uses a small wheeled wheelchair. Assistance required to collect her from her door & help her to a car, have room for her chair in car boot & take her to church & return her home on a regular or occasional basis. If you can offer help now & again, please contact Brigid on 07971713727 who can put you in touch with this lady. (DBS check required) Thank you.

Floor Polishing and other 'Thank-yous': The hall, the sanctuary and the shrine of Our Lady have all had their floors polished this week; this is an example of the hard work that many people are putting in to keep the church in good shape, and we all benefit from this. Many thanks, not only to those who have polished the floors, but to the many people who help maintain the church and its grounds. Keeping the church clean and attractive as well as keeping it safe is a valuable and important part of the mission of the church; people are more likely to be attracted to an attractive place than to a dirty one! Thanks also to those who serve refreshments at the 9.00 Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays. This is very much appreciated. Thank you also for the cakes — to any who have not yet come to refreshments, they are highly recommended!

Scripture Readings 16th January 2022, 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Writing after 515 BC, when the Temple had been rebuilt after the exile, third Isaiah heavily criticised idolatry and other excesses in the Temple, and injustices among the people. But he also had this glorious vision of a restored Jerusalem, comparing the Lord's delight in his people with the bridegroom's delight in his virgin bride.

The Psalm invites all mankind and all creation to praise the Lord, the one true God.

Over these Sundays before Lent we hear from Paul's letter to his beloved church in Corinth. Paul criticised the Corinthian Christians for misbehaving during the Eucharist: the rich ate and drank too well, while poorer members of the community were left out. The church should have unity in diversity: different gifts are given to different individuals, so that all contribute to the whole.

Fr Michael Bingham SJ

It is with great sorrow that we heard on Wednesday of last week of the death of Fr Michael Bingham, whose family live in Northampton, and who was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Grant in St Gregory's in 1974. His father was a local doctor, and they moved to the parish when Michael was five years old, and it was here that he made his first Holy Communion and was prepared for Confirmation. The following is a report from the "Northern Ireland World"

"Originally from Liverpool, he was soon adopted as a local after moving to Portadown. When tensions arose in this area Fr Bingham was known to be a calming voice. He also worked hard to foster good cross-community relations and he himself enjoyed a strong relationship with the other church denominations in the area.

"He was widely recognised for his work with the Drumcree Community Trust, where he served for over 20 years, including as chairperson, where he worked to make a real difference to the lives of ordinary people in this area. Fr Bingham was also known for his work at Maghaberry Prison. He has made a huge contribution to this area over the past few decades and leaves behind a lasting legacy." Requiem Mass will take place on Monday 17th January in the Church of St. John The Baptist, Drumcree, at 3.00pm with burial immediately afterwards in the adjoining cemetery. "Fr. Michael's Requiem Mass will be broadcast via Drumcree Parish online livestream."

The Hope Centre and the Crib collection

A magnificent £1503.57 has been given through the Crib collection and refreshments through Advent and Christmastide. In addition to this, a further £500 has been given from the Repository from sales of Christmas Cards and other goods over the Christmas period. This is the greatest sum we have ever raised from the Crib donations. Thank you to everyone for your generosity. The Repository has also given £500 to Gregory Care to support their work in partnership with the Cathedral Foodstore.



Next Sunday

Sunday of the Word of God. Bishop David will celebrate this with a special liturgy in the Cathedral at 3.00 pm, at which readers will be blessed for their ministry. All readers are invited to attend.

After the Baptism of Jesus, and before resuming our readings from Luke's gospel, we hear today John's description of a marriage feast at Cana. A happy family occasion, to which Jesus and his newly chosen disciples were invited. Both Isaiah and Paul saw that the Lord longs to join himself to his church as intimately as possible. Water intended for use in Jewish purification rites is replaced by the fine wine of the heavenly banquet.

Psalm Response: **Proclaim the wonders of the Lord among all the peoples.**

(Isaiah 62: 1-5; Psalm 95(96): 1-3,7-10; 1 Cor 12: 4-11; John 2: 1-11)

Chris Oliver

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen

Synod 2021-23

Jehanne Houghton, Catherine Mulligan and Aideen Fogarty will be inviting people to get together and talk about the particular questions that have been put to the Church. It is important that everyone has a chance to participate in this process which will continue over the next six weeks. It will be done in small groups rather than through formal meetings. It is worth thinking about these questions in advance:

- ? What does it mean to you to be a Catholic?
- ? What are your experiences of the Church doing something well?
- ? What are your experiences of when things have not gone so well?
- ? What are your dreams for the Church?

There is an additional question which would be of interest in the parish and is very relevant to the overall theme of the Synod which is "Communion, Participation and Mission".

- ? How do you feel about the Alpha programme?

Communion is not just 'Holy Communion'; it is about the communion that we all have with each other; about fellowship in Christ. Participation is not just about attending Mass, it is about how we take part in the entire life of the parish, and Mission is not just about supporting Missio, it is about how we become truly 'Missionary Disciples'.

The End of Christmastide

This week the crib will be put away, the liturgical colour returns to green and normal programmes resume. This is the last day for making donations to the Hope Centre through the crib — it looks as though we may break our record. Thank you.

St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which we are hoping will be able to be in the hall and in person. It is highly recommended for everyone, and is very enjoyable. Each session starts with a good meal (A proper evening meal, not just a snack), then we watch a film together about our faith. After the film we have a conversation around our table about what we have seen and heard. It is good to have established believers as well as potential converts and those who simply want to know more about our faith. Please come, and if you can, bring a friend. There is no charge, but donations are cheerfully accepted. For catering purposes, please register at

www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha

Bishop David will preside at a Service of the Word in the Cathedral at **3pm on Sunday 23rd January**. As a part of this Service Bishop David will bless all readers who proclaim the Word of God in their parishes. All readers are invited to attend.

First session:	After Easter 2022: Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	After Easter 2022: Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	After Easter 2022: Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session	After Easter 2022: How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session	After Easter 2022: Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session	After Easter 2022: How does God guide us?
Seventh Session	After Easter 2022: Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day	After Easter 2022: Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session	After Easter 2022: How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session	After Easter 2022: Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session	After Easter 2022: What about the Church?
Eleventh Session	After Easter 2022: What about the rest of my life?

DIocese of Northampton Liturgy Commission- Liturgical Formation



The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word

*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 Allan Jones CRIC, Mgr Kevin McGinnell & Fr Andrew Behrens

Tuesday 18 January 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

An Introduction to Luke

Wednesday 23 February 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for Lent

Wednesday 6 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for the Triduum

Wednesday 20 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Celebrating Eastertide

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 or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1)

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

(Photo from www.pexels.com)