



# 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

# A sower went out to sow

So begins one of the best-known and best-loved of the parables of Jesus. It is an image that would have been familiar to everyone living in Judea in the first century. The style of farming was primitive but effective. The costs of farming were small; a sower, a bag of seed, some land By God's grace some rain falls, and the crops grow. At harvest time the community helps for the in-gathering, remembering to thank God for the first-fruits of the harvest.

It is true that not all the seed grows well, but enough does so that the community is fed and does not starve.

In the developed world the sower is replaced by a seed drill, a mechanical device which is pulled by a tractor. It is no use for a small plot of land; it requires a large field to work in, and the land must be prepared by ploughing. It must be fairly level and even, and have no obstructions. It is fine for large farms, but of no use in a small-holding, such as those which surround the villages in the developing world.

In such small-scale farming, seeds are kept back from the previous year's harvest, and the farmer chooses seed from the plants that have grown best. The farmers exchange seeds between themselves, which ensured that there is bio-diversity; this reduces the risk of the loss of an entire crop due to a particular pest or disease.

Over centuries of tradition, local communities have discovered what works; they may not have studied the science of agriculture, but have learned the practical application through generations of experience.

It is certainly true that far too many of the world's population goes hungry, and an obvious solution to this is to produce more food. When about a third of the world's food is not eaten but wasted, much ending up in landfill which produces methane gas, (one of the main greenhouse gasses) this apparently obvious solution may not be the right one.

In order to produce more food, areas of forestation in Africa and South America are cleared, reducing the rain forests which are helpful in absorbing the carbon in the atmosphere. Large farms are set up, using tractors, seed drills, combine harvesters and many other heavy, expensive machines which require purchasing (usually with a loan which must be repaid) and then feeding with fossil-fuels. From time to time they require maintenance, which is another expense. These machines are operated by one person, and many are left without work. Many have no land to farm themselves, and many of them become migrants, seeking a livelihood in another country, many of them taking the dangerous route across the sea in small boats. Others are unable to obtain the seed they need to farm in their traditional way. All because of more efficient farming so that we can continue to waste a third of our food!

CAFOD has a campaign running entitled:

## Fix the Food System

Thousands of Catholics across England and Wales have taken part in CAFOD's [Fix the Food System campaign](#) this year. Together, we've been urging both the UK government and the World Bank to protect the rights of farmers around the world to save, use, exchange and sell their seeds.

The good news is that the government is listening. We have received a detailed response to our campaign demands, which the government has asked us to share with everyone who has taken part in the campaign.

The bad news is that the government's response shows they're failing to help farmers or the environment. Here are three examples.

### 1. **The government fails to acknowledge the ways in which the World Bank places restrictions on small-scale farmers' access to seeds**

In CAFOD's recent report '*Sowing the seeds of poverty: How the World Bank harms poor farmers*' we show how restrictive seed laws, which make it harder for farmers to grow and use their own seeds, are imposed on them because of the World Bank.

### 2. **The government ignores how the World Bank's approach to agriculture is bad for climate change**

The letter mentions the importance of climate adaptation and having the right seeds to respond to "rapidly changing climate conditions". But it fails to even acknowledge that the industrial seeds that the World Bank and UK promote often require chemical fertilisers that are produced using fossil fuels.

Continued fertiliser production is incompatible with the urgent need to tackle the climate emergency. When these fertilisers are used, they release nitrous oxide, which is a greenhouse gas that is estimated to be 300 times as potent as carbon dioxide.

### 3. **Increased productivity is pushed at all costs, even when there are harmful consequences**

The government is effectively arguing that damaging the planet is a price worth paying for short-term productivity gains. This is wrong, because not only are millions of people going hungry, the planet is also suffering.

CAFOD is asking us to sign a "Big Letter" to the World Bank, asking them to change their policies to encourage the small-scale farmers. This letter is available to be signed after all Masses today.



# Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Ellie Jane Alford and  
Thomas Edward Alford  
who received Christian Baptism recently.  
Please pray for them and their family.

**Car Park Safety:** Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish nor 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.

**Bible Alive** for July & August is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church.

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Church, from 10am-12pm.

**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. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be in the Sacristy at 7pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

**First Holy Communion 2023:** Enrolment for 2024 will be Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. after the 11am Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered & their parents at the 11am Mass on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates and times will be available at the registration. Please see the separate article on the way the programme works.

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

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

**Choir Notes:** our next practice is after evening Mass on the Holy Day of the Assumption of Our Lady 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. Before that, we have an opportunity to share our faith with the residents of **The Crescent Care Home**, NN1 4SB, which is within a mile of St Gregory's. Apparently "Songs of Praise" is popular with that community so, following our Christmas carols selection, we will provide our own version of SOP. This will take place on **Thursday 27 July from 2-3pm**, not a note longer. Our singers will combine those regularly involved at 9 & 11 at St Gregory's but we would welcome others to help boost our cross-faith effort. Alec will be cracking jokes between each hymn - not something to be missed!

**Pilgrimage of Reparation & Prayer for the Sanctity of Life, to Walsingham:** Sat. 5<sup>th</sup> August, led by Archbishop Kevin McDonald. For details see the poster on the noticeboard, or go to [www.prolifepilgrimage.org](http://www.prolifepilgrimage.org). Please join in the 'great prayer for life' asked for by Pope Saint John Paul II.

**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.

**National Catholic Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Walsingham:** Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July from 11am to 4pm. A day of faith & fun for all the family. Please see poster for full details.

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** Our last session this term is on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July which we hope will be in the garden! We start again on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 9:30.

**Dog lovers wanted!** Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email [volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk)

**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)

## 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.

**Refreshment Donations:** Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	The Hope Centre
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	Gregory Care
Through Lent and Eastertide:	CAFOD
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

**Men's Walk:** On Monday evenings there is a walk for any men who would like to come along, no ongoing commitment required and those interested can come along to join whenever they are available. There is also an element of prayer and socialising some weeks as time allows. For more information about times and routes each week please contact Alex on 07963032175.

## Mission Prayer

Heavenly Father  
it is your will that we should make disciples of all nations.  
We ask you to bless the mission of our Diocese of Northampton and guide our hearts and minds  
so that your will might be done  
and your kingdom be build up here on earth.  
We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit,  
without which our work is in vain,  
and we entrust ourselves to your beloved Son,  
for we know that he is with us for all time, now and for ever.  
Amen.

## Assembly Insight

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation."  
(1 Peter 2:9)

## Prayer 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 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year A

Second Isaiah, writing around 550 BC, concludes his "Book of Comfort" to the Jewish exiles in Babylon with an invitation to a joyful banquet. After renewing His covenant of peace, God has reminded Israel that "my thoughts are not your thoughts": God's words come down gently to bring forth divine fruits, like the rain which enables the earth to yield its fruits.

The psalm give God praise and thanks for his power over all the earth and the rains which produce abundant crops.

Paul continues this theme of God's plan slowly moving towards its climax: creation is unable to attain its purpose without help, and it was made this way by God. Paul gives us a brilliantly clear vision of God's plan: with the coming of Christ creation is now groaning in the birth pangs of being set free.

It is worth listening carefully to Matthew's explanation of the parable of the sower. And especially to Jesus' very difficult statements that he talks to the crowds in parables because "they listen without hearing or understanding". He says "They have shut their eyes, for fear they should see, ... and be converted". The coming of Jesus brings both judgement and mercy. But some will not receive God's words, unless their minds are open and cease making their own image of God.

Psalm Response: **Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.**

(Is 55:10-11; Ps 64(65); Rom 8:18-23; Mt 13:1-23)

*Chris Oliver*

## What is the Diocese?

The diocese is the local Church, and it is made up of parishes. It has no real existence without the people who, for pastoral care and the provision of worship, live in the many parishes of the diocese.

The Diocese provides certain facilities which need the economy of scale, and, above all, the services of the bishop. However, it has no resources of its own; it is the parishes working together in the worship of God and the mission of his Church.

## Gregory Care

On 2nd September Fynnius Fogg -The legendary 70s charity band, will be playing at the Cathedral Centre raising money for the Foodstore - many of you will have seen them before and know what a fabulous evening we'll have! Tickets will be available soon at £12:50 so please keep this date in your diary. Supper included! (And a bar) We will also be collecting Tombola prizes over the next few weeks so if anyone has any new items suitable to donate please put them in the toiletry box at the back of church.

# The Diocesan Mission Appeal

—When Bishop David came to our Diocese three years ago, his stated priority was (and remains) the mission of the Church in the Diocese. This aim is totally in line with what has been our parish priority for many years.

Sadly, as he got to know the Diocese, he quickly came to realise that all his ideas had to be put on hold because of the immediate financial crisis that we were facing, brought on by COVID and the total lockdown.

Bishop David is concerned that we do not seek to point fingers or attribute blame; we have no one to blame for the pandemic, and the reality is that, as a small diocese, our financial reserves were much less than most others, and to survive the lockdown it was necessary to take out a substantial loan which must be repaid, and as interest rates are rising, this must be done sooner rather than later.

It is generally agreed that mission in our own diocese is part of our 'core business' and should not be relying on extra appeals, but equally, it is so important that it cannot be reduced as part of the ways in which the diocese needs to reduce expenditure.

At St Gregory's, we have been devoting a significant part of our resources to local missionary work for many years. Part of this has been spent on setting up and subsidising Alpha, although thanks to the generosity of many people involved, this has been a modest requirement. We spend money on Sacramental preparation and much of the money spent on improvements are motivated by the need for a more welcoming environment to encourage first-time visitors to become regular worshippers.

Recognising the importance of this throughout the diocese, St Gregory's has already given £1,000 from the parish funds to the Diocesan appeal which is designed to support parishes which have not yet embraced the idea of mission as we are doing. The second collection next week will help to offset that donation, and so it is important that there is a generous response. Please be ready for this collection next week, and help us to be even more supportive of the mission of the Church in our diocese.

There are four areas in which the diocese is seeking to help parishes in their local mission. By far the most important is in outreach — to make contact with the very many who never attend any church, but yet recognise that there is a gap in their life. Many seek to find that fulfilment in other ways, but do not realise that it is God who is calling them, and that they can find it in church. Part of our ministry of welcome must be to help those who are seeking to realise that the 'crock of gold' they seek is not far away, but to be found in a living relationship with God.

The second area of mission is through social action. We do this largely through our support for the financially needy in our area, and in this we are working closely with the Cathedral Foodstore and through our support by gifts of toiletries, although our own Gregory Care is helping families in other ways. Clearly it would be inappropriate to be reporting on specific work, but through 'Good Samaritan' activity, we seek to bring the love of God in practical ways into people's lives. This is not in any way to 'bribe' people into church, but does demonstrate that the Church is not always asking for money! Through 'Caritas Northampton' this sort of work is being supported throughout the diocese.

The third area is in Catholic education. Our schools in Northampton went through a difficult time but now are good schools, and the way in which they are distinctively Catholic schools is clear. Through chaplaincy and the good work of the increasing number of Catholic teachers, they can become better still. We were blessed by a visit from students and staff from Thomas Becket Catholic School (which is in this parish) the week before last at the 9.00 Mass, and both we and they hope that this will become a regular event. It is important that the work in schools which goes beyond the National Curriculum is adequately funded.

The fourth area of mission activity is in youth ministry. In recent years the most obvious forms of this in the diocese have been the Lux and Blaise events and the summer camp at Alton Castle, but there is a need to connect this with the life of the parishes week by week, and offer support at a much more local level.