



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

Explain the Scriptures

“Explain the Scriptures”. These words come from the Gospel acclamation, and derive from the passage immediately before that which we read as the Gospel for today’s Mass, when Cleopas and his friend are walking to Emmaus, and Jesus comes to join them, and he explains to them how the Scriptures of what we call the Old Testament point to the coming of the Messiah, and how he must suffer, and then enter into glory (*Luke 24:25-27*).

In our passage today we see a repetition of this. Cleopas and his companion had returned to Jerusalem in great excitement having had this wonderful experience of meeting Jesus, hearing him teach them and finally recognising him in the breaking of bread. Having left Jerusalem in a state of sorrow, which was turned to joy through this experience.

It is worth remembering that this is what happens at every Mass in our days. Indeed, the expression “The Breaking of Bread” was one of the earliest names for the Mass (*Acts 2:42*).

The two friends arrive back in Jerusalem and find the eleven who we call the Apostles (twelve less Judas Iscariot). It is then that Jesus appears to them and they think that he is a ghost, but he shows them that he is in his body; truly risen. He then “opened their minds” to understand the Scriptures.

It may seem odd that he had been teaching them for three years, yet still they had not learned, but the reality is that few of us can learn everything immediately, and much of what we understand is tied up with experience.

We can learn the theory, but until we have the experience of putting it into practice, it remains only theory. We can learn about swimming in a classroom, but until we get into the water, we cannot actually swim. So it is easy to imagine how the Apostles, although they had heard Jesus speak about his passion and resurrection during those three years, had not appreciated the true meaning of what he was saying. We must not be too hard on the Apostles, because we too are sometimes slow to understand.

It is a truth that many who have been Christian for many years find that they are still learning about Jesus; in fact, the reality is that none of us in this life knows it all! So it is that many have had a new experience of the love of God at some point well into their Christian life; some would even call it a conversion experience. It can take the form of a re-awakening of Christian life, a making real of the prayer which is in the front of every copy of our hymn book:

**Father,
pour out your Spirit upon us,
grant us a new vision of your glory,
a new experience of your power,
a new faithfulness to your Word
and a new consecration to your service,
that your love may grow among us
and your kingdom come.**

During Lent we had the opportunity to discover about the life of the “Dynamic Catholic” — all the talks are still on the parish website. Matthew Kelly, the author of the book on which these talks were based suggests that a very small proportion of Catholics can be described as ‘dynamic’, and his book invites every Catholic to become more dynamic in their Christian life. Nicky Gumbel, in the Alpha course speaks of the same reality when he speaks of Christians who are “full of the Spirit”. Sherry Weddel similarly writes about ‘Intentional Disciples’.

This ties in with the second reading at today’s Mass, where St John tells us that “we can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments”. This is, of course, the “new faithfulness to God’s Word” that we prayed at the head of this column. John is writing to believers (*1 John 5:13*), but recognises that they still have things to learn and understand. He writes to us in the same vein.

There are so many areas of life in which this is important, and one of them is life itself. Remember the words of the tempter (appearing as a serpent) in the Garden of Eden. “Did God *really* say you must not eat of the fruit of the tree?” Today the tempter, in many forms says “Did God *really* say you shall not kill” The inconvenient pregnancy; the terminally ill — did God really mean that. To the Spirit-filled, to the dynamic, to the intentional disciple, we answer the tempter, “**YES, He did!**”

We cannot expect the person whose life is entirely ruled by secular standards; by the way of the world to understand this; their minds need to be opened by Jesus, just as were the minds of the first Apostles.

We would love to live in a world governed by Christian laws, but we cannot expect those who are not Christian to understand this. That is another reason why we are called to be “missionary disciples”. “When anyone does obey what he (God) has said, God’s love comes to perfection in him.” (*1 John 2:5*)

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for Easter & May 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 10am & speak to a Steward who will show you what to do & where to go.

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: The programme has started and is running through 'Loom', an on line platform used by many schools. Parents need to 'home-school' children. The programme is called "Growing Up Catholic", and there are 6 sessions preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, followed by six sessions preparing for First Holy Communion.

Confirmation: At last we have a date: 1st October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux!

Re-Envisioning Catechesis: The Church has recently produced a new version of the "Directory for Catechesis", which makes clear the link between evangelisation and the teaching of the Faith. One fruit of this is that the diocesan department for catechesis has been moved from NORES to the new department for Mission, and to help those who are engaged in Sacramental preparation, there will be an on line course over 5 consecutive Thursday evenings, starting on 17th June at 7.30 pm (ending at 8.45 pm) on Zoom. If anyone would like to take part, please let Fr Andrew know (by email, please), and the parish will make the booking.

A message from CAFOD: Thank you for your generous donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day during Lent. We featured Marian and her son Svondo in Zimbabwe in Lent 2018. The community vegetable garden that your donations helped provide is growing well and during the pandemic the family has survived on the vegetables. Your support has also helped to provide soap and handwashing stations in the garden and in family homes. This is just one of many long-term development projects that your Fast Day donations has funded. Thank you for your steadfast support.

Being a Dynamic Catholic: Through Lent there were regular talks which are on the parish website and Facebook page based on a book entitled "Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic" by Matthew Kelly. All these are still available on the parish website.

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is currently recruiting for a Breakfast Club Team Member and also a Lunchtime Supervisor (all details will be on the school website).

Thomas Becket Catholic School is seeking a full time assistant site manager. Applications close on 23rd April, and full details are to be found on the school's website: www.thomasbecket.org.uk or from Jan Hayes (HayesJ@thomasbecket.org.uk).

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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

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

Parish Finances: Thank you to everyone who has been so very generous during this lockdown. Our parish finances are reasonably stable. Your generosity is much appreciated!

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)**

The NYMO team is back Thursday 15th April, in the Studio, for our online event for young people! With the usual mix of fun, worship, silliness & prayer, this night's not to be missed! With our usual segments like Grill the Priest & NYMO's online Quiz, we will also have inspiring talks & moving prayer! Evening will premiere on our YouTube channel from 8-9pm, & open to ages 11-18. So come along, chat with others in the comments, be inspired by our guests & see just what God wants to say to you this Easter season! To watch along simply make sure you are on our YouTube channel 'luxnymo' at 8pm on Thursday - we can't wait to see you there!

Masses and Covid security in Lockdown: It is of the greatest importance that the church is a place of safety from the COVID virus, & while clergy & stewards do all they can to have systems in place, there is a responsibility on everyone to adhere to government regulations & maintain the safety of **everyone** as well as themselves in church. While 'bubbles' & households may sit together, there should be at least 1 metre distance separating those not in the same 'bubble' or household & must wear masks. We are still allowed to come to Mass; this is in part because churches are safe places. It is up to us to keep the church safe.

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.

Pro Life Chain - Saturday 29th May 2021: On Saturday 29th May SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. This act of silent witness is to remember the thousands of lives lost to abortion since the Abortion Act 1967. It will take place between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm. Please consider joining us at this important event. Last year twelve pro-life supporters stood together in order to proclaim the pro-life message. It is not easy to take part in a public display in relation to such a controversial subject, but it is so important that we speak up for the most vulnerable in society, the unborn. If you can join us or want more information then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.



Why Alpha: Pope Francis has asked that every parish and every Catholic have a missionary heart. In 2019, over 5,600 Catholic parishes and organisations around the world ran Alpha with an estimated 310,000 participants.

"Many parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit have found Alpha a great tool for helping men and women hear the initial proclamation of the gospel. I am pleased that our use of Alpha with the archdiocesan staff has invited a recommitment to the basic truths of the gospel."

Archbishop Allen Vigneron, Archbishop of Detroit — USA

Scripture Readings 18th April 2021, 3rd Sunday of Easter, Year B

After Peter healed the man lame from birth, who had been begging at the Beautiful gate, the man joyfully walked with the Apostles in the Temple. At the portico of Solomon Peter addresses the crowds, emphasising that the man had been cured by the power of the God the Jews believed in, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's kingdom is already becoming visible.

Perhaps reflecting later antagonism between some Jews and Christians, Peter adds that it was "you", "men of Israel" who insisted on killing Jesus, declared innocent by Pilate. But, Peter says, they "acted in ignorance" so that God's plan would be fulfilled.

The Psalm begs God's aid and admonishes incredulous observers to put their trust in God.

Paul appointed presbyters to lead his young churches. Thirty years later, John's community appears to have almost no structure. But there are problems: "many antichrists have come", and some members have left the community, perhaps misled by the small amount of moral teaching in John's Gospel. Paul's hierarchical model survived, but tension between structure and charism continues.

How strange the resurrected Jesus appears! The two disciples had recognised Jesus after he had left them in the inn on the way to Emmaus, but now they are frightened, thinking him a ghost.

Psalm Response: **Lift up the light of your face** on us, O Lord.

(Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19 ; Psalm 4; 1 John 2: 1-5; Luke 24: 35-48)

Chris Oliver

New envelope time again!

It is time again to say 'thank you'. In the next two weeks the planned giving envelopes for the coming year will be distributed. It is good to be able to report that our income during the past year has been adequate to cover our costs; final accounts cannot be produced until we have the full return from the diocese, but we appear to have run at a small surplus in spite of the difficulties of the past year. Many people have transferred to giving by standing order, and this is now our biggest source of income, but giving through envelopes is also substantial; averaging nearly £270 a week. For those who are coming

to Mass, please can you collect your new envelopes; those that are not collected will be delivered in the next few weeks.

This parish is blessed in the generosity of the people, enabling projects like the kitchen makeover (see below) to take place and for us to have the active missionary initiative through our Alpha courses. We are able to respond to the request of Pope Francis to be a truly 'missionary parish' as we all seek to become genuinely missionary disciples.

Anyone who would like to join the envelope scheme, or to start a standing order for the parish, please ask Fr Andrew.

Kitchen Makeover

Work has already begun in the task of upgrading the kitchen; both the kitchen and the store-room have been cleared out and much has gone to the recycling centre. It will take several weeks to accomplish, and thanks must go to those who have already given time to this work.

Volunteer labour will be gratefully received in due course. Cliff Snelling will project-manage the operation, and specific requests for help will come from time to time. We plan to complete this during the time that the hall remains closed due to the restrictions, and have it ready for when we can re-open for our normal use.



Narthex revamp

The map which has been in the narthex for many years was intended to be a reminder of the global nature of the Church, and that we have people at St Gregory's whose original home was far away from here. The plan is that on the boards either side of the door will be the message "Welcome" in the language of every place represented here. You may be asked to help!

Us and Climate Change

In 2005 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) produced a report warning that a number of major cities in coastal areas could be subject to flooding by the 2070s unless serious steps were taken to reduce climate change. This flooding would in part be caused by sea-level rise due to the melting of the polar ice-caps, in part by storm surges due to an increase of extreme climate events and in part by higher rainfall.

The ten most vulnerable cities were: Mumbai, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Miami, Ho Chi Minh City, Kolkata, Greater New York, Osaka-Kobe, Alexandria and New Orleans.

The population of these cities was estimated to be 150 million people who would become homeless, and the cost to the world economy projected to be 9% of global gross domestic produce. The international crisis of poverty and migration would be enormous.

That was sixteen years ago, and climate change has not been halted. Rich countries can put up coastal defences, such as England has with

the Thames barrier, although last week we lost part of Dorset and regularly the coast in East Anglia and Yorkshire erodes. Poorer countries can do little to protect themselves.

Today much of sub-Saharan African populations will experience droughts preventing farmers from producing sufficient food. This causes the population to migrate to countries that can give work, food and housing for their families. What we do causes this climate change! Each of us make some contribution to this crisis. Can we make a change in our own life-style to help?

Pope Francis has recently repeated that the wealth of the planet should be shared with all people on the planet.

In conscience how can we, living in one of the richest countries in the world, not regularly support our brothers and sisters around the world through CAFOD.



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