



# 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

## New Carpet in the Ambo

For over 350 years following the reforms of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, there was very little study of the way in which the Mass was celebrated or churches were arranged. Early in the twentieth century there was a new-found interest in the liturgy, awakened by the discovery of many early documents which had lain in ancient churches and monasteries unseen for generations. This went hand-in-hand with the renewed interest in Biblical scholarship which resulted in new translations of the Scriptures.

The fruits of this work are to be found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and particularly in those that deal with the celebration of Mass; particularly ‘Sacrosanctum Concilium’ and the ‘General Instruction of the Roman Missal’.

Among the re-discoveries of this is the place of the ‘ambo’. This may seem to be a new word in our liturgical vocabulary, but it actually goes back to very early writings on Christian worship. The word derives from a Greek word meaning ‘elevated’, and as congregations increased in size in the fourth century, such a raised up place was needed for the person proclaiming the Scriptures to be seen and heard. The distinction between a ‘lectern’ and an ‘ambo’ is that the ambo is fixed and immovable; a lectern is smaller and moveable.

The ‘General Instruction of the Roman Missal’ says:

“The dignity of the Word of God requires that in the church there be a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and toward which the attention of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word. It is appropriate that generally this place be a stationary ambo and not simply a moveable lectern. The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and readers may be clearly seen and heard by the faithful. From the ambo only the readings, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) are to be proclaimed; likewise it may be used for giving the Homily and for announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should stand at it.”

Ambos in many churches became very large, and frequently on legs leaving an empty space underneath, which was seen to symbolise the empty tomb, indicating that all Christian understanding and preaching is founded on the Resurrection.

Through the mediaeval period, gradually the true significance of the ambo was forgotten, and new traditions grew up, such as the growth of forms of worship other than Mass. These would frequently be accompanied by a sermon, which would be delivered from a simple raised platform which could be placed

wherever needed. They were the places from where missions were preached. Initially these were simple and portable, but later became fixed and large; these were known as pulpits.

Thus we have these three related names and objects, but the Church wants us to think of the ambo as the place for reading the Scriptures at Mass in order to emphasise the dignity of the Scriptures within the celebration of Mass — a place as



dignified as the Altar.

Our ambo at St Gregory’s has been dignified by the new carpet which is given in memory of Philip Ndekwe who used to read from it. We are grateful to Maggie and her family for this gift.

## Come Home for Christmas

This invitation is made to all who do not attend Mass regularly; they are welcome home! However this invitation needs to be made, and there are cards which you can give to a person who might come with you to one

of the Christmas Masses. It is important to give the invitation in person, not just drop the card through their letter-box, and to come with them to Mass, not just meet them in church.



# Notices of Interest

**Bible Alive** for December 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.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass – Catholic Diaries for 2023 are now available, as are Christmas cards and mementos! 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*

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration:** As a trial, Holy Hour will be Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This can only continue if there are sufficient numbers to sustain it. No one is expected to remain for the entire two hours, come for as long as you can or want to.

**Window Decorations:** The trays for window decorations are available in the foyer after each Mass on Sunday; anyone who would like to do a window is welcome to collect a tray. Please bring the completed tray back to church any time before Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December. If you want to put it up in a window, please feel free: the trays need wiring to the hooks in each window. Please do not use candles as part of the arrangement as they cannot be lit for safety reasons.

**Residential for all in Year 7-Year 13:** NYMO are once again running our annual LUX weekend from 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Feb. The weekend is packed full of fun activities, moving times of prayer and inspirational talks. Come and join around 100 other young people from all parts of the diocese for an unforgettable weekend! For more information and to book a place check out our website [www.nymo.org/lux](http://www.nymo.org/lux)

**Food Parcels:** Please contact Gregory Care (01604 713015) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

**Christmas Cards:** With the very high cost of postage, you are welcome to leave Christmas Cards for people who attend St Gregory's Church on the table at the back of church. However, **PLEASE** do not just write the Christian name on the envelope!

**Save the Date: Saturday 18th March 2023** Encounter Northampton, a day hosted by Mission Northampton in St Gregory's Hall from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. More details later!

**Choir Matters:** I have cancelled Christmas...practices, as we are now as fully prepared as we can be in the circumstances. *Alec*

**King's Park Conference Centre** in Moulton Park, Northampton are hiring for:

- Centre Manager
- Duty Manager
- Chef

King's Park is a Christian run conference centre serving thousands of people each year from charities, churches, youth and charitable organisations. Please see poster for details.

**Flame 2023:** The theme of Flame 2023 – which is exactly 150 days before World Youth Day in Lisbon – takes the WYD Scripture “Mary arose & went with haste” and crystallises it into the theme, “Rise Up!” Rise up after the pandemic, Rise up as young Catholics, Rise up – as Mary did – for the surprising and beautiful adventure that is our Catholic faith. **Sat 4<sup>th</sup> March 23 - book the date - more details soon**

**Church Heating:** The Church heating has to be on for two hours before it even begins to warm up, so not running it for weekday Mass is a way of making a considerable saving. Please come in warm clothing! We will heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

**A course on the Psalms:** It is sub-titled “The School of Prayer”, with the invitation to ‘learn to pray like Christ’. The course will continue for three more sessions after Christmas; on 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January.

**The God who Speaks:** The ‘Year of the Word’ continues and the Diocesan Bible Study sessions for the Sunday Mass readings are continuing. On January 18<sup>th</sup> there will be an introduction to the Year of Matthew (Year A in the lectionary)

**Missio Donors/ Red Box holders:** Calendars for 2023 are free to supporters & are available now: visit table beside the confessionals. New supporters of Missio to help spread the missionary work of the Church are always welcome and needed. For further information speak to the clergy or Dorothy (9:00 Mass) or Alec (11:00 Mass).

**Stella Maris** Thank-you so much for all the knitted items this year! The Port Chaplin in Ipswich is most grateful and wanted me to pass on his appreciation. Stella Maris have updated it's knitting section on the website. You can find it online at <https://www.stellamaris.org.uk/knitting/> or pick up a printed copy at the entrance the church.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> Jan at 7pm 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.

**Flowers for Christmas:** The usual envelopes for donations for Christmas flowers will be available from this week in the Narthex.

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

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** We have re-started: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!!

**St Gregory's Brownies:** St Gregory's has a Brownie Unit who meet in the hall on Wednesday evenings. We have some spaces due to some of our girls going up to Guides and would love to meet some new prospective Brownies. We are all aged between 7 and 10 years. Please get in touch with the leaders on [tw.lewis@ntlworld.com](mailto:tw.lewis@ntlworld.com) for more information or a little chat.

**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)**

**Refreshment Donations:** Thank you for your generous donations to the Bible Society which amounted to £127.04. All donations given now from after Sunday Mass will be given to the Hope Centre, and added to offerings made at the crib.

**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 22nd December 2019, 4th Sunday of Advent, Year A

First Isaiah was writing before 700 BC, when Judah was under attack. Isaiah promises that a time of peace will come when Israel returns to living simply, with no riches to make others envious. But only if they keep their faith in God. Without being asked, God gives King Ahaz a sign of his support: a young woman will bear a son, to be named Emmanuel, "God with us". Israel will still suffer. But a remnant of David's house will survive, like the stump of a fallen tree.

After praising God's universal dominion the psalm gives moral requirements for assisting at divine worship.

Paul begins his letter to the Jewish Christian community in Rome very carefully. They did not know him, so he assures them that he shares their beliefs, especially that Jesus, a descendant of David, is the Christ, proclaimed Son of God through his resurrection.

Before Matthew describes Jesus' birth, he lists 42 ancestors linking Jesus firmly with Abraham, David and Israel's kings. The list includes four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah. Through their unconventional behaviour, a remnant of David's line survived, reminding us of the important roles women have always played in God's plan.

Psalm Response: **Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.**

(Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 23(24); Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24)

*Chris Oliver*

## 'Twas the night before Christmas

The Mass for children on Christmas Eve has long been one of the most popular parts of St Gregory's celebration, and children are being rehearsed for their parts in that Mass. Some say that Christmas is for children, but the truth is that we are all children at heart, and the joy of Christmas is for everyone. We have a good number of children in the First Holy Communion preparation group, and a good number attend Children's Liturgy each week. Many thanks to all who are helping in this. Please note that anyone interested in Confirmation should see Helen after the 9.00 Mass today.

## Christmas Gifts for the person who doesn't need more!

### CAFOD World Gifts

World Gifts are a range of virtual charity gifts that will delight the people you give them to and help transform the lives of families living in poverty. Ranging in price from under £10 to £4,000, you can buy a queen bee for £4, or a vegetable garden for £5; for £10 you can teach someone to read. <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

### Cathedral Foodstore

Christmas Gift cards are available, priced at either £5 or £10, suitable gifts for those for whom you cannot think what to buy. The

money helps to buy food for the Cathedral Foodstore, the card is your gift.

Cards can be bought after Sunday Mass or from the parish office on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays

### Gregory Care Toiletries

Your gifts of toiletries to Gregory Care are an important part of the support given by the Cathedral Foodstore to needy families. Thank you for your continued generosity

### Hope Centre Food

Continued thanks for your regular generosity to the Hope Centre. From this Sunday and

until the end of Christmastide your donations for refreshments in the hall are given to the Hope Centre, along with the offerings at the crib

### Caritas 'Love Christmas'

Caritas Northampton are collecting toys, books, games, puzzles, chocolates to luxury biscuits, slippers, socks, gloves and scarves, perfumes and aftershaves, makeup and jewellery, colouring books and baby gifts which are distributed throughout the diocese as Christmas gifts to needy families. <https://northamptondiocese.org/lovechristmas/>

## Preparing the church for Christmas

Many thanks for the donations for Christmas flowers. Catherine Stratten is master-minding flower arrangements; please offer any help to her.

There are trays available for decorating the windows; if you can prepare one (or more) please make sure they are back by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

## Preparing yourself for Christmas

### Penitential liturgies

Monday evening at the Cathedral at 7.00 pm

Tuesday evening at St Gregory's at 7.00 pm

### Confessions

Saturday after the morning Mass (9.45 am)



## Inviting people for a Christmas Mass

"I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.' (Psalm 122:1)

### Christmas Eve

Vigil Mass (with children's nativity)	5.00 pm
Syro-Malabar Mass	7.00 pm
Carol Singing	11.30 pm

### Christmas Day

Midnight Mass	Midnight
Mass of the Dawn	9.00 am
Mass of the Day	11.00 am
Syro-Malabar Mass	4.00 pm