



# 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

# We Dare To Say

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are addressing the all-powerful, transcendent God of the universe; creator of all that is and ever has been. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we call God, ‘Father’. We are presented with two truths in this part of the prayer. One, the loving fatherhood of God for each one of us, inviting intimacy and communion. Two, the hallowing of the name of God, the need to respect and worship his greatness and majesty (cf. *Psalm 30:4, 97:12; 103:1; 111:9; Ezekiel 36:22-27; Isaiah 52:6; Genesis 32:28-29*). The enormity of this is so easily lost on us.

In contemporary society, there is often a sense that fatherhood is repressive and problematic – for example, the derogatory use of the term patriarchy. Unfortunately, it is the case that some fathers are no more than ‘begetters’, having little to do with the children they help to bring into the world. We need to rediscover the true identity of what it means to be a loving father.

God the Father, as Olivier Clément, the French theologian reminds us, transcends sexual duality (note the Catechism CCC 239). The ‘entire Bible,’ he writes, ‘evokes the “bosom of mercy,” *rahamim*, in the sense of the womb: this Father is motherly. He “senses” his children as a mother “senses” her own, with her whole being, with all her flesh and within her bosom’ (cf. *John 1:18*).

God’s love for us is total: maternal, paternal, unequivocal, unconditional. The relationships that we have with our own family, with our friends, are but shadows of this. This is why, even where our own relationships with family, our own fathers, are weak or damaged, acknowledging God as Father offers healing and sanctuary.

The Israelites had a sense that God was Father of his People (e.g. Exodus 4:22) but rarely would an individual address God as Father. Yet, remarkably, Jesus invites us to do just that. In the Aramaic – it is likely that Jesus would have taught this prayer in his native tongue – the word is *Abba*, more akin to ‘Dad’. The relationship is familiar, that is ‘of the family’, and intimate.



Baptism incorporates us into this intimate, familial relationship. By virtue of our Baptism we are united to the Father, as his adopted children, and to each other as brothers and sisters. This reality is often obscured by our sin which results in conflict, jealousy, fierce competition and acts of pride. We frequently act as if our own growth is when others are diminished. The reality is that true spiritual growth comes when we use the gifts that God has given us at our Baptism. For when we diminish so that Christ increases, we will begin to understand more fully what it means to be the Father’s adopted sons and daughters. When this happens other relationships, with each other and the created order, start to be restored.

Jesus taught us this prayer to draw us closer to God the Father, to recognise our precious ‘spirit of sonship’ and dignity. And because we are adopted sons and daughters, ‘God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba! Father!’ (*Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15*).

The picture, reproduced from the ‘Martyr’s Picture’ by Durante Alberti is in the church of the English College in Rome. We are invited to meditate on the picture and then consider these questions.

Describe what you can see, what is happening?

What does this picture say about the relationship within the Trinity?

In Baptism, you enter into this relationship of love. How do you respond?

How might you deepen your knowledge and love of God in the coming days?



# Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Carla-Monica Petrila  
who received Christian Baptism recently.  
Please pray for her and her family.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. We still need more helpers especially after 9am Mass. I want to express a huge thank you to the loyal band who make the whole enterprise possible! Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

**Bible Alive** for Lent is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church. There are also several small booklets of Walk with Me available for Lent. Please see the table in the Narthex.

**Gregory Care Give something up for Lent!** We will be holding a table top sale on Saturday 13th April in aid of Gregory Care. We are appealing for new or very good pre loved items to sell eg bric-a-brac, books, toys, clothes etc. Can you give something up for Lent to benefit someone else? We are not talking house clearance! But if everyone could donate something, maybe that you no longer need, we would love to relieve you of it. We will be gathering things together throughout Lent please place items in the box under the table at the back of Church.

**Dates for your diary:-**

Table top sale Saturday 13th April.  
Parish Picnic in the Park Sunday 23rd June  
*More details to follow nearer the times.*

**On Saturday 2nd March**, Margaret and Barry Mizen will visit the St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral to share their incredible story.

**SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 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 2023/4:** All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

**Confirmation in 2024:** There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to [childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk) for further information.

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next - Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Feb**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

**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
<b>Through Lent and Eastertide:</b>	<b>CAFOD</b>
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

**Household Support Fund:** West Northants Council have received further funding from Dept. of Work & Pensions to support eligible residents until 31 Mar. Support available for West Northants residents earning less than £450 per week. Anyone who is eligible should visit <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/claiming-benefits/household-support-fund>

**Donorbox:** St. Gregory's has now signed up with Donorbox to enable people to make donations to the Church via a QR code. This is a safe & easy way of making a one-off donation without having to have cash on you!



If you have a smartphone, just point your camera at the QR code, click the link & the site will see you through the donation process. There is a larger version of this QR code in the Narthex area and in the hall for refreshment donations!

**Fire Safety — Important notice.** Unlit candles **must not** be placed on the trays under the places for candles and candles must not be stacked one on top of another.

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10am-12 pm.

**As we prepare for the Jubilee year** in 2025 as 'Pilgrims of Hope' you are invited to join our diocese on pilgrimage. There are plenty to choose from including the Shrines of Northern France in Oct. 24, Lourdes in Aug. 24, Walsingham in June 24 and Rome and Assisi in 2025. For more information on all of these pilgrimages and our diocesan walking pilgrimage, 'The Way of Our Lady of Guadalupe' visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/pilgrimage/>

**Light up Lent (29<sup>th</sup> Feb - 7<sup>th</sup> March)** is our diocesan Week of Accompanied Prayer, a retreat in everyday life. Begin or deepen your prayer life, get to know the Scriptures better, & above all, grow in faith & love for the Lord who loves you. With one-to-one support each day for a week, via Zoom, from an experienced prayer guide. Find out more here & at our introductory webinar on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 7:30-8:30pm. <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/event/lightuplent/>

**Bishop David** is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at [debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org)

**Urgent Appeal- SPUC:** In relation to the Criminal Justice Bill, Labour MP Dame Diana Johnson is persisting with amendment NC 1 which would effectively remove any legal safeguards with regards to a woman procuring her own abortion at any stage of pregnancy, up until natural birth. Please write to your Member of Parliament asking them to vote against the amendment when it is presented to MP's (date not yet known). To find your local MP go on the local government website or the SPUC. For further information or for assistance in framing your letter please contact William Currie on [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com) or text to 07393965643. Thank you

**Choir Notes:** The next practices will be on Saturday mornings of Lent, 11-12:30: Feb 24; Mar 2, 9, 16, 23 as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. After that it will be May 4. *Alec*

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration:** Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.

**Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:**

Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war:

**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**



# Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February: The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B

Genesis describes how, after the Great Flood, God established the first covenant with humanity, promising not to destroy all living creatures again. Every rainbow reminds us of God's care for all creation.

The Psalm asks for God's guidance and pardon, before meditating on God's goodness towards the just.

Peter applies the Genesis story to Jesus. We should not "repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse" but repay hurt with a blessing. If God wills that we suffer, then it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. God's promise to Noah is fulfilled in Christ, who "in the body was put to death, in the spirit was raised to life". Just as Noah was saved by water, so we are washed in the water of baptism and

make "a promise to God from a good conscience" rising into a new life in Christ.

In Mark's gospel Jesus' baptism is followed immediately by this very brief description of his temptation in the desert. Angels guided the Israelites during the Exodus. Now angels look after Jesus as he rejects Satan and remains obedient to God, announcing the Good News to begin his human ministry.

Psalm Response: **Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.**

(Gen 9: 8-15; Psalm 24(25):4-9; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 12-15)

Chris Oliver



## ***Bishop David writes:***

This year, we hear a very short account of Jesus' time in the wilderness. In fact, unlike the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark does not give us any detail of the temptations Jesus faced during this time in the desert. Maybe there is something very helpful to us in this. We do not have the power to change stones into bread. We would be very foolish to try throwing ourselves off high places, in the hope we would be caught by angels. And then, isn't every sin a bowing down to worship our enemy? We are simply told that our Lord was 'tempted by Satan'.

I love these encouraging words from the Letter to the Hebrews, 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' (Heb 4.15-16)

We are not disciples of a Lord who stands apart from our weakness and temptations. But Jesus has overcome these temptations. And this means a powerful grace for ourselves. It means we can drink deeply from the mercy he has won for us on the throne of his glorious Cross.

What we hear in today's Gospel is very much part of our heavenly Father's loving plan of salvation. Because of the Fall, humanity fell from the life of grace. We lost our relationship of intimacy with God. And let's be honest here, we struggle to get along with each other most of the time. And so God found a way to bring us back home.

The Holy Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness. This sounds a bit more than just a suggestion or a hint. Jesus is compelled to go out into the desert with the loving obedience of a Heart that is totally focused on the Father's will. And this becomes our vision for the Season of Lent. This is a time of great blessing. What a gift is offered us over the coming days.

Jesus was with the wild beasts. It is relatively safe to be a Christian in our part of the world. Sadly, this is not so for every disciple of the Lord. And it wasn't for those first Christians who read this Gospel. They were being persecuted and martyred for their faith by the Roman authorities. They were keeping company with wild beasts in the circuses of the Empire.

But then we hear something else. We hear what happens when Jesus' forty days in the wilderness were over. Jesus began his Galilean ministry. He proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom. The work of bringing home the lost and suffering begins. And this work still continues today. And this mission is our task today. I truly hope and pray, we all have a blessed and grace-filled Lent this year.

*Bishop David*

**PILGRIMS OF**  
AN EVENING WITH BISHOP DAVID OAKLEY  
**HOPE**

Bishop David will be coming to our parish on Monday September 9<sup>th</sup> to reflect on what it means to be a pilgrim of hope. He will answer questions from those present and pray together as a community. It will begin at 7.00 pm

You are invited to attend and invite those who wish to discover more of the beauty of our Catholic faith.

*Born For This*  
BY JO BOYCE

Weston Favell Academy students will be taking to the stage to share a moving and powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross. The performance will be at St Gregory's Church at 7.00 pm on Weds 27th March (lasting approx. an hour)  
It is FREE to all. Donations welcome.