



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



The Master Invites . . .

This picture, an engraving by Giovanni Battista Falda, made for Cardinal Sigimondo Chigi in the late 17th century is a beautiful icon of the Church. The arms come out from the basilica in a gentle embrace, welcoming in all who wish to come. But the Church is called to do more than just to welcome; it is called to invite.

Jesus told the parable of the Great Dinner, recorded in Luke's gospel (14:15-24). It is echoed in Matthew (22:1-14), but in Luke's version, there are three types of guests. The first are those who were originally invited, but declined the invitation. The second were those who willingly accepted and came in, but they did not fill the house, so the servants were sent out into the byways and hedges. There are various translations of the Greek for what the servants were asked to

do — make them come in; compel them to come in; force them to come in. However, the word has a broader range of meaning, and can be understood as 'applying gentle persuasion' or 'convincing'.

The implication to the Church's mission is that we must both welcome those who are in the second group; those who come in of their own accord, but also to go out and invite. Again, our translations vary, but the 'byways and hedges' suggest the marginalised. The second group came from the town; the third from outside the town, the use of the word 'hedges' suggests the homeless.

Our mission is to both the second and the third. The 'Welcome Team' make the second group at home in the Master's house; our Alpha programme invites the third group. We are all called to be involved.



22 Park Avenue North
Northampton. NN3 2HS
Website: www.stgregory.org.uk

19th December 2021
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Parish Mass Book - Year C
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Priest:
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Pastoral Assistant:
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Safeguarding representative
Carol McNeil ☎ 621807

Sunday <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i>	9.00 am 11.00 am 12.00 pm 5.00 pm	Mass Mass Mass Mass (Syro-Malabar Rite)	Michael Taylor RIP Rose Ogbata's Intentions The Parish
Monday Feria	9.00 am 7.00 pm	Mass Penitential Mass (Cathedral)	Gerald Gardiner RIP
Tuesday Feria	9.00 am 7.00 pm	Mass Penitential Mass	Nora Scott's Intentions
Wednesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Sheila Maling RIP
Thursday Feria	9-10am 11.00 am 7.00 pm	Holy Hour of Adoration Funeral Mass Mass	Ann Achong RIP Joanne Muguri's Intentions
Friday <i>Christmas Eve</i>	9.00 am 5.00 pm 11.30 pm	Mass Vigil Mass Carols until Midnight	Ann & George McCann RIP Children of the Parish
Saturday <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	12.00 am 9.00 am 11.00 am 12.00 pm	Midnight Mass Mass Mass Mass	Bishop Francis Thomas. St. Gregory's Clergy. Parish, Parishioners & Families. For Those who have asked for Christmas Masses.
Sunday <i>The Holy Family</i>	9.00 am 11.00 am 12.00 pm 5.00 pm	Mass Mass Mass Mass (Syro-Malabar Rite)	Tom Donaghue RIP The Parish Altar Servers

Normal opening times: Due to the relaxation in restrictions, the Church will be open every day from 8.45 am until 5.00 pm, except on Thursdays when it remains open until 7.45 pm

- Your Offering to the Parish:** Last Sunday's collection was £324.87. Thank you!
Standing Order gifts to the Parish: Each week £486 is given through standing orders.
Donations through the Diocese: An average of £77 is given each week.
Gift Aid benefits to the parish: The value of Gift Aid averages £88 per week
Cleaners This Week: The Church is cleaned and sanitised daily by the stewards.
Counters This Week: CC & PS.

Readings for this Sunday (Readers 9am: Paul Sefton, 11am: Nithin Lukose.)

- Micah 5: 1-4:** *Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.*
Hebrews 10: 5-10: *Here I am! I am coming to obey your will.*
Luke 1: 39-45: *Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?*

Readings for next Sunday (Readers 9am: Tony Wittich, 11am: Beth Johnson)

1 Samuel 1: 20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3: 1-2, 21-24; Luke 2: 41-52. (Page 40)

- During this season** Migrants & Refugees; Expectant Mothers;
Of Advent, Open-ness to God's word;
We are asked to pray for: The Bishop, Clergy & People of the Diocese.

Plan B; Omicron, COVID and Christmas:

The difficulty that the Prime Minister had in persuading his own party to support his 'Plan B' regulations is indicative of the wide variation of attitude in the country as a whole. There are some for whom socialising is more important than their health, or who have total faith in three injections as protection against the virus. Others have exactly the opposite attitude. We must be understanding of both, but while offering welcome to the confident, must recognise the real and valid fear of the cautious.

The 'Welcome Team' have a crucial role in both offering welcome to everyone, but also to ensure that precautions are observed, and that everyone not only protects themselves but also everyone else in the church. Sanitiser must be used and social distancing observed; it may be necessary to restrict entry and ask people to come to a later Mass if the church becomes reaches its capacity. The toilets can be used if necessary, but please will users apply sanitiser as necessary.

Tickets will be issued for the 5.00 pm Christmas Eve Vigil Mass; these will be valid until 4.50 pm (ten minutes before the Mass starts). From 4.50 pm, there will be general admission until the capacity of the church is reached. **Please remember — If you feel unwell, DO NOT COME!**

Please pray for the sick:

Debbie	Jean O'Neill
Fr Philip Swingler	Khanh Phan
Michael Spowart	Matt Murphy
Owen	Deacon Rory
Fr Ed Worthy	Aileen Hasdell
Margaret Farragher	Katy
May Murtagh	Sr. Margaret
Richard Redmond	Teresa Redmond
Catherine Stratten	Mary Morgan
Leo Bell	Maureen Bell
Michael Rowback	Margaret M
Marion Gilbert	Bridget Devane
May Cramphorn	Andrew Stewart
David Pick	Liam Murphy
Barbara Jones	Virginia Thomas
Hilary Green	Colin Smith
Mark Coleman	Breda Coleman
Paul Gilbert	Gillian Brockway
Alastair Mackenzie	John Hodges
Alyssia Wraxall	Margaret Bryant
Shane Lonergan	Jayne Miller
Doris Moss	Elsie Smith
Frances Taylor	Florence Dunn
Glynis Garibaldi	Donald Green
Maire West	Paul Eaton
Diana George	Alex Zaloga
Sandra Coughlan	Eileen Flanagan
Josephine Ahern	Barbara Murray
Gerry McGuinness	Sheila Dowling
Jim O'Connor	Sheila Frost
Peter Frost	Bridie Walsh

Anniversaries:

May they Rest in Peace

Mary Cocks	Elizabeth Hubbard
Maud Barber	Bertha Brugger
Athol Milton	Henry Brierley
James O'Mahoney	Italia Jacobs
Ellen Winterhalder	John Morris
Giovanna Scineca	Alice Vogt
Ann Nightingale	Stanley Quest
Ronald Bonnett	Louis Golding
Elizabeth Morrison	Michael Kirwan
William Redmond	Peter French
Mary Dillane	Margaret Muff
Mary Manktelow	Ronald Percival
Thomas Kane	Helena Freeman
William Kneeshaw	Gerard Tuite
Marina McCarlie	Joseph Daly
Michael Walsh	Teresa Glibbery
Emily Glazebrook	Michael O'Grady
William Coveney	Joan Darby
Brian Donnelly	Douglas Golding
Thomas Billingham	Louisa Percival
Irene Hearne	Nancy Ginnelly

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER

That the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Notices of Interest

Repository: A display of Christmas cards & other items are available in the Hall foyer. Due to Covid & the lack of new staff this will be in reduced form. Please observe Covid recommendations. I am grateful that my small but very loyal helpers will try to be available, but if there is no-one to help, please put money into wall box to the right of the Sacristy door. *Kathleen Healey (01604) 629103*

Bible Alive for December & January 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.

Used Postage Stamps: As Christmas rapidly draws near could I appeal to everyone to save their used postage stamps. My loyal supporters will already know that the used postage stamps raise thousands of pounds for the missions abroad. It all started when a young priest became very ill & was sent back to England to die. He wanted to do something useful with his time, & eventually started collecting used postage stamps & postcards. This caught on in a big way & lots of money was, & still is being raised. It doesn't cost anything except a bit of time. They are being sent in the name of St Gregory's & I pay the postage myself. The good news is that the young priest is now in his 90s, & still going strong. Truly God works in mysterious ways. Thank you, *Linda Fleming*

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 10th January, 7pm. Please note that 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.

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)**

Choir Matters: To avoid travelling in the dark on Thursday's, choir members have asked for practices, up to Dec 17, to be moved to Fridays every week: 2-3:15. *Alec*

Courses for Readers: The Bible Timeline course has broken for the Christmas break, but will resume on January 5th, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. We will be starting with the Book of Judges and moving on the Books of the Kings. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

LUX Pilgrimage: A fun residential weekend for young Catholics aged 11 (Year 7) -18 years from 4th-6th February 2022 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk (transportation included from Luton & Northampton). Please contact Fiona at fiona@nymo.org or visit www.nymo.org/lux for more information and to book your place

An act of Spiritual Communion

I prostrate myself at your feet, O my Jesus, and I offer you the repentance of my heart, which abases itself in its nothingness and in your Holy Presence.

I adore You in the Sacrament of your Love;

I desire to receive You in the poor abode that my heart offers You.

While awaiting the happiness of Sacramental Communion, I wish to possess you in spirit.

Come to me, O my Jesus, that I may come to You. May your Love inflame my whole being in life and in death.

Jesus, I believe in You, I hope in You,

I love You. Amen. *Pope Francis [20 March 2020]*

Penitential Liturgies before Christmas: There will be a penitential liturgy and opportunity for confession at the Cathedral on Monday 20th December and at St Gregory's on Tuesday 21st December, both at 7pm. Confession is also available on Saturdays after the 9am Mass, or by appointment (please email Fr Andrew).

Online Advent Retreat: Online retreat, Mondays through Advent 13th and 20th December 7.30-8.30pm. Join Fr John Udris and Avril Baigent for an online retreat helping us to pause, reflect and encounter the Lord. Last week focussed on the life of St Nicholas, and Fr John showed us how the saint reflects Jesus' own self-giving: "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls." You can catch up with the session here: <https://youtu.be/3QowdeEslng?t=295>.

Our final two sessions focus on the lives of St Lucy and St Joseph. To join our online community on a Monday night register here: https://lift_up_your_eyes.eventbrite.co.uk, or watch the sessions here <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/lift-up-your-eyes/>

News from the Foodstore! Thank you for your generous response last week. We as a parish are supplying toiletries to add to the food bags from the Cathedral Foodstore. Please donate what you can, & continue to pray for this work. Remember that as the weather gets colder, the need becomes greater. Many Thanks, *Gregory Care.*

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

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.
Thank you.

Tots @ St Gregory's: TINY TOTS will finish for Christmas this Tuesday (14th December) and 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!

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

Message From The Diocesan Finance Team: As the Catholic Bishops of England & Wales have decided to continue to offer a dispensation of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, we know many people won't be returning to churches at Christmas. We also know many people will wish to offer a gift to their priests for the sacrifices they make through the year. If you would like to offer a gift to your priest this Christmas, please call 01604 712065 between 9am-5pm from Monday 20th - Thursday 23rd and 9.00am-1pm on Friday 24th December. A member of the team would love to hear from you.

Scripture Readings 19th December 2021, 4th Sunday of Advent, Year C

Micah was prophesying in Judea around 720 BC. The rich were defrauding the poor, and prophets even misleading the people by assuring them that all was well. Which is what people wanted to hear. No, said Micah: “Zion would be ploughed like a field” – utterly destroyed, as happened in the exile in 586 BC. But a remnant would survive, and a ruler would come from Bethlehem, David’s birthplace. When “she who is to give birth gives birth”, the mother of the Immanuel, then the remnant will come back to the Lord.

The Psalm pleads that the Lord’s help come soon, as Israel is being hard pressed by its enemies.

Hebrews continues to explain the differences between Christ’s sacrifice and animal and food sacrifices offered in the Temple: these had to be repeated again and again, because they did not bring forgiveness of sin. Only Christ’s sacrifice could remit sins:

it is the fulfilment of God’s will, rather than the holocausts he does not want. Jesus is seen as explicitly offering himself, so that not only are our sins forgiven but we may be made holy.

The Gospel begins the Christmas story with Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, soon to give birth to the last of the Old Testament prophets.

Psalm Response: **God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

(Micah 5: 1-4; Ps 79(80); Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-44)

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

The Synod Process

Our parish conversations will help us to grow together as the Eucharistic community that meets at St Gregory’s and can bring great blessings to us.

In the New Year and through January we will seek to set up conversation groups, although there are whispers of another lockdown, and this may have to be through Zoom or in some other way.

It is worth thinking about these questions which are offered as ‘conversation-starters’:

- ? 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?

As a parish, we have a vision, stated on every newsletter, that we will be a thriving Catholic community, confidently and humbly proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

To what extent is this vision being realised, and what can we do more of, or do better to bring this vision to reality?

Uncertainties

Many are speaking about a new lockdown in the New Year; we have plans, but they may have to be changed. Keep watching

Christmas Flowers

Envelopes are available for donations for Christmas flowers on the table in the narthex. If you wish your flowers to be in memory of a particular person, please write their name on the envelope. This will appear in the Christmas newsletter.

Window Decorations

The trays for window decorations are available in the sacristy 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 on Christmas Eve before 4.00 pm. 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.

Christmas Cards

Please can everyone check whether there is a card (or cards) addressed to them on the table at the back of the church. Please too can those placing cards there include the surname of the intended recipient so that there is no doubt who it is for,

The Master Invites . . .

The equivalent parable in Matthew’s Gospel to that of the Great Dinner in Luke is found in chapter 22:1-14, and although recognisably the same story, it told with a different slant. However, the idea of the invitation is the same. In both cases, it is servants who are sent out to deliver the invitation; in fact the word used is ‘δουλος’ (doulos) which is usually translated as ‘slave’, but is the same word that St Paul uses of us in Ephesians 6:6 and Colossians 3:24, and that St Peter uses of us in 1 Peter 2:16.

We are therefore the bearers of the invitation, but the message is not “You go to the party”, but “Please come with me to the party”! Remember the words of the Psalm: “I rejoiced when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the House of the Lord’”. (*Psalm 122:1*)

The beauty of the Alpha programme is that you are inviting a friend to a meal and a film, with a chance to talk about it afterwards, and it is an evening with no commitment to anything beyond. The film titles are questions that most people ask at some time in their life, and in the conversation, there are no ‘wrong’ answers. Everyone is free to say whatever they think, and there are no arguments!

The next Alpha will be after Easter, but now is a good time to be thinking about who you might invite. You might be surprised to find that someone for whom you have been praying is happy to come!

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

First session:	21st September 2022: Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	28th September 2022 Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	5th October 2022 Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session	12th October 2022 How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session	19th October 2022 Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session	9th November 2022 How does God guide us?
Seventh Session	16th November 2022 Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day	19th -20th November 2022 Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session	23rd November 2022 How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session	30th November 2022 Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session	7th December 2022 What about the Church?
Eleventh Session	14th December 2022 What about the rest of my life?