



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 Return: Look to the Book

Last week we started examining the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, as told in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as the prophets of the time; Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The reason for looking at this part of the Old Testament is that we can learn from this about our own return to Mass in church.

There were three phases of the return from exile, the first was in 537 or 538 BC, and had the task of the rebuilding of the Temple. We know that it is the community itself that is the Church, and our task is not so much the rebuilding of the physical structure of the church; rather it is about rebuilding the community of faith that has been affected by lockdown and social isolation.

This is vitally important task, and this will be explored in the coming weeks, but for this week, our theme is the second return. This was not a single migration, but took place over a period of around 75 years. Chapter 8 of the book of Nehemiah tells of how the people assembled to hear the words of the Book of the Law were read to them. “Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel” (*Ezra 7:10*).

For Ezra and the returning exiles, the Book of the Law was the first five books of the Old Testament. For us, the Book is the entire Bible. The first task is the rebuilding of the community; the second is to deepen our love and knowledge of the Word of God.

The chronology of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah seem to be somewhat unclear, and that may help our understanding of how these tasks, together with that which we will examine next week relate to each other. They are not necessarily sequential; one after the other; rather they go on side-by side at the same time. Indeed, the opportunity of the lockdown (our exile) has given us a wonderful opportunity (dare one say, even a God-given opportunity) to have to time for reading and studying the Scriptures.

There is a need for care here: Jesus speaks to the Jewish scribes: “You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (*John 5:39-40*)

The Scriptures have to be studied in the light of faith; they are not simply documents of literature. The written word of God points to the living Word of God, the Word that was made flesh and lived among us; Jesus Himself.

That is why we read that there were Levites to give the interpretation of the words that Ezra read (*Nehemiah 8:8*). It is not just the reading of the word that matters, it is understanding the word, and realizing what God is actually saying to us at this moment that matters. That was the case for the hearers in the days of Ezra, when the people

realized that they had done wrong and resolved to put it right. (*Ezra 10:1-5*)

We have been blessed to have had access to the ‘Bible Timeline’ courses, and as soon as we are able to meet together again without ‘social distancing’, we will be resuming these courses.

The foundation of these is the basic Bible Timeline course, which over 23 sessions takes us through the history of salvation, from Genesis through to the life of the Church as told in the Acts of the Apostles. As we read the narrative books we are able to place the books of the prophets and other books of the Old Testament in context, and in the New Testament to recognize the people to whom St Paul wrote his letters.

For those who have not engaged in adult Scripture study before, this is an excellent place to start. It does not assume any prior knowledge, and the small-group conversations help us to gain understanding, while the video presentations give a lucid explanation, all supported by reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

After the Timeline course, there is a detailed course on St Matthew’s Gospel, which examines the Jewish roots of our faith, and then a course on the Acts of the Apostles. Each of these last about 6 months, and it is not recommended that anyone does more than one a year, so these ‘foundation courses’ would take three years.

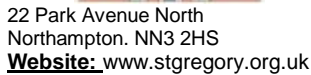
Having done the foundation courses, there are a number of short courses, and new ones are being added each year. We have just ordered the latest one, on the Letter to the Hebrews.

There is a course on the Psalms, on the letter of James, on the letter to the Ephesians and on the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse). In addition to that there is one on the Mass and on Our Lady, both based on Bible Study, and one on the life of the Early Church.

We have no idea when restriction will be lifted; the most recent government statement said it would continue “for the foreseeable future”. [People will differ in their opinion of the capacity of the government to foresee.] We still hope that we can re-start courses in the autumn, but it may not be until next year; no dates can be given yet.

However, it is not too soon to be making a resolution to take part in a course when they do restart. In particular, all those who are readers at Mass would benefit from them. In the years when we have been running them, the vast majority of those who have participated have said how much they have benefitted; most have come back to do more courses. It is not just the benefit; the building of new community friendships have been an additional benefit, helping to rebuild the temple of the Church.

Next week: the third task.



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Sunday <i>16th Sunday of the Year</i>	9.00 am	Mass	Jim Donnelly RIP
	11.00 am	Mass	The Parish
Monday St. Apollinaris	11.00 am	Mass	Fr. David Donaghue
Tuesday St. Lawrence of Brindisi	11.00 am	Mass	Tony Reape RIP
Wednesday St. Mary Magdalene	11.00 am	Mass	Amelia Woolmore RIP
Thursday St. Bridget	7.00 pm	Mass	Patricia Crutchley
Friday St. Sharbel MakhluF	11.00 am	Mass	Philip Ndekwe RIP
Saturday St. James	11.00 am	Mass	Patrick Devane
Sunday <i>17th Sunday of the Year</i>	9.00 am	Mass	The Parish
	11.00 am	Mass	Philip Ndekwe RIP

Last Sunday's collection was £165.92. Thank you!

Each week £390 is given through standing orders.

The value of Gift Aid averages £133 per week.

There is no Church cleaning at the moment.

After sin you will grant repentance.

The Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words.

Let them grow together until the harvest.

Readings for next Sunday

During this season

Human Life: Seafarers:

Victims of Persecution/Oppression:

Europe; Christian/Jewish Relations.

Are you new to the Parish? You are welcome!
Please introduce yourself to the Clergy
In hospital? Let the Chaplaincy know on 01604 714556
If you are in need, please ring Gregory Care on 07982 235379. Someone will respond as soon as possible. Please be patient.

Although normality has certainly not returned, Mass will return to its normal times from Monday 27th July; that is to say, at 9.00 every day except Thursdays when it is at 7.00 pm. Recently very few people have been coming to church in the afternoon, so the opening times will change to opening at 8.30 am and closing at 12.00 noon. It is important that we all play our part in preventing the spread of the virus, and social distancing, hand-washing and general hygiene are the best ways we as individuals and as a Church community can do this.

The obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Mass remains lifted and those who are shielding and those who feel unwell (whether with 'official' CoVid-19 symptoms or not) should not attend Mass. Those who feel vulnerable (whether officially so or not) should also not attend. The on-line Mass cannot be made available until after it has been celebrated, most days this will be by midday, but not on Thursdays, when Mass is at 7.00 pm, and cannot be uploaded until after about 8.00 pm.

Fr Andrew Behrens ☎ 713015

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Deacons:

Rev Michael Fleming ☎ 647750

E-mail: **mvf@btinternet.com**

Pastoral Assistant:

Maria Heath

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[illegible]

May they Rest in Peace

Lawrence Leonard	John MacKay
Joseph Brosnan	John O'Toole
Michael Fraher	Emma Darby
Thomas Grant	Rosella Pickerill
Nona Todds	Richard Fitzgerald
William Walker	Agnes Bingham
Mark Bingham	Jane Chisholme
Ron Fryer	Patrick Holland
Carmel Challis	Walter Denny
Edith McGill	Terence Collins
Philip Masson	Norah Battle
Anthony Lasslett	Kathleen Bradbury
Violet Burke	Amy Butlin
George Page	Margaret Millmore
Elizabeth Greaves	Michael Greenan
Antonietta Riseley	Anna Amalfitano
William Mulcahy	Martin Kelly
Ann Hill	

FOR JULY

**We pray that today's families may
be accompanied with love, respect
and guidance.**

My Jesus.

I believe that You are present
in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already
there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from
You.

Amen.

Notices of Interest

Confession: Confession will be available between 11.00 am and 2.00 pm daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.

Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre: Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:
<https://cafod.org.uk/>
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

The Office: Now that the Church is finally allowed to open, I am happy to see people during office hours. However, I must ask you to stay at the office doorway so that social distancing can be maintained. Thank you. *Caryll*

Bible Alive for July & August 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. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

For Parents and Teachers. CAFOD have launched a National Assembly for schools. This amazing assembly can be used both in the school setting for collective worship, as well as at home. It is all about CAFOD's 'Summer of Hope' and informs, inspires and encourages children, at a time when children may really need it. It is led by passionate youths and is a real must-watch! <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/Summer-hope-assembly>

CAFOD Corona Virus online petition: Out of love for our brothers & sisters please sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Following Mass on Thursday evenings there will be Adoration until 8.30 pm.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 20th July at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 0799908997 before you attend to book your place.**

First Holy Communion — 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation - 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 20th November (Note change).

Fairtrade: Nestlé have decided to stop using Fairtrade chocolate in their KitKat chocolate bars. This has come as a great disappointment to up to 27,000 farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji and Malawi. There is a petition asking Nestlé to reverse this decision: <https://www.change.org/p/ulf-mark-schneider-nestle-global-ceo-keep-kitkat-fairtrade> (Otherwise, have a break from KitKat.) So far over 27,000 people have signed, and there is an update on the petition website. As a Fairtrade parish, we should all be supporting this.

Notice from the Diocese

Online Donation: The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

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)**

Becoming a Catholic: For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

Global Healing: The Bishops' Conference have produced a film entitled "Global Healing", which can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/global-healing/global-healing-films/main-film/>. It highlights the state of our planet & looks more closely at the Pope's encyclical letter on caring for our common home – Laudato si'.

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

EWTN
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

Scripture Readings 19th July 2020, 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Book of Wisdom was probably written in Alexandria about 50 years before Christ, to encourage the faith of Jews living in a pagan Egypt. It wrestles with the age-old problem that evildoers are not punished in this world. Wisdom insists that God is just and merciful: he will reward the just after death, although this book does not say how. We can see that God moderates his own power with his justice from the way he gave the Canaanites time to repent during the exodus, and we should follow his example by showing mercy to those who hurt us.

The psalm really says it all this week: God is a loving God, a "God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger", "good and forgiving, full of love to all who call." Eventually "all the nations" – ie the Gentiles – will come to adore God.

Paul has been telling the Romans we may have confidence in the future life God has planned for us. God sends the Spirit to help us and to enable us to express our prayers more meaningfully.

The Gospel shows God's mercy in action. Instead of venting punishment on sinners and immediately uprooting them, God patiently gives us time to repent.

Psalm Response: **O Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

(Wis 12:13,16-19; Ps 85(86); Rom 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 75: ***Living Sustainably with creation:** there is evidence that the **FAST FOOD** industry reopening is producing Litter; so lets try to do a **LITTER PICK** in our community.*

Tip No. 74: ***Solidarity with the Poor:** predictions suggest that people needing **FOOD BANKS** will triple this autumn. Let us send donations / cheques to the **HOPE CENTRE** to feed the **HUNGRY**.*

Actions to LiveSimply : Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype.

Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew

Year of the Word

As the '[God Who Speaks](#)' Scripture initiative is extended through 2021 to take into account the cancellation of many non-digital events planned for this year, BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship programme comes from Yorkshire and focuses on a special Bible-focused service "A Word for All Seasons".

2020 is the 'Year of the Word' in the Catholic Church in England and Wales – to celebrate, share and live out faith through deeper Scriptural engagement.

Dioceses across our two countries have engaged in different projects as part of this initiative and [BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship](#), scheduled for 8:10am on 19 July, comes from the [Diocese of Leeds](#) where priests and parishioners have been exploring the 'Word Unlocked'.

Fr Michael Hall will lead 'A Word for All Seasons' to reflect on how the 'God who Speaks' meets us in the changing

circumstances of our lives – especially significant at a time when many Christians will have been turning to the Bible for comfort through the coronavirus pandemic.

Fr Michael is parish priest of two churches St Joseph's and St Patrick's in Brighouse and Elland respectively.

The service will include Scripture passages that have particular emphasis on the importance of the Word of God and hymns and motets previously recorded in Leeds Cathedral by the Leeds Diocesan Choirs.

The homily will be given by the Diocese of Leeds' newest priest, the soon-to-be "Father" Henry Longbottom who will be ordained in Leeds Cathedral just two days before the Sunday Worship Programme.

The God Who Speaks initiative is a partnership between [Bible Society](#) and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Listen: bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_fourfm Listen to BBC Radio 4 live at 8:10am on Sunday, 19 July 2020 or listen to it on 'catch-up'

During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The August "Bible Alive" is now available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.

