



The Catholic Parish of Saint Gregory the Great Northampton



PART OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON, REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 234951

OUR
VISION

**“A truly thriving Catholic community,
confidently and humbly proclaiming the
Good News of Jesus Christ.”**

OUR
VISION

A huge number, impossible to count

One of the many strange spectacles of the Coronavirus era has been the sight of normally crowded places with hardly a soul in sight. Last week Fr Andrew was outside St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, and had virtually the whole piazza to himself. How very different to normal times, when indeed, the crowd would have been impossible to count. St John, in our first reading today speaks of the population of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Saints in this way.

The letter to the Hebrews also speaks of a great crowd: “so great a cloud of witnesses” (*Hebrews 12:1*), again referring to those in heaven. It lists heroes of the Old Testament, some of whom are named; Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Samson, David and Samuel. It speaks of those (un-named) who suffered mocking and flogging, chains and imprisonment; those who were stoned to death or killed by the sword. It speaks of those who went about in the skins of sheep and goats and were destitute; faithful to God, even though those who came before Christ did not see the fullness of God’s wonderful revelation. As Jesus himself said: “many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and did not see it, to hear what you hear and did not hear it” (*Luke 10:24*).

Today we can look back on two thousand years — perhaps 70 generations of Christians, the names of some of whom we know; Peter, Paul, Matthew, John, Mark, Luke, Gregory and many more, and others whose name we don’t know, but suffered martyrdom, or showed heroic Christian virtues, or simply lived a life of faith following their own vocation with faith and love. These we honour today; collectively, the Saints.

St Paul begins the first of the letters of the New Testament addressed to the Romans: “To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be Saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Romans 1:7*). That same greeting and challenge is addressed to each one of us: **we are called to be Saints!**

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews encourages us: “We are not among those who shrink back and are lost, but among those who have faith and are saved” (*Hebrews 10:39*). The stories of the saints can sometimes seem a little frightening. We look at their heroic courage and think we could never be that brave. There is a tendency in some of the written lives of saints that fails to tell of their struggles against temptation, or indeed of their faults and failings, and show them as unreal perfect.

St Ignatius of Loyola, reading of the life of St Francis and St Dominic was inspired: “I too can do this” (*from the autobiography of St Ignatius, recorded by Luis Gonçalves da Câmara in 1553*). When we read of the goodness of saints, our response should be the same: “I too can do this”.

St John Paul II was very concerned that there should be canonised Saints from the modern age to act as examples and encouragement to us. The eras of Francis and Dominic, of Ignatius or Alphonsus are very different from our own, whereas we can still see the poverty that St Teresa of Calcutta faced, or the political corruption that St Oscar Romero stood up against.

Among the holy people of our own age is Blessed Carlo Acutis, whose beatification was on 10th October this year. He was born in London in 1991, but his family moved to Milan just a few months later, where he grew up. His parents were not ‘religious’, although he was baptised as a baby, and in due course, came to receive First Holy Communion and Confirmation. In many ways his childhood was ordinary, but he developed a deep love for the Blessed Sacrament, and wouldn’t pass a church without going in if possible.

He loved football, video games and uploading holiday films onto YouTube, but above all, he was a ‘computer geek’. In many ways, a typical 21st century teenager. Yet, as well as all that, he sought to be a faithful Christian. The Eucharist was the key; “If we get in front of the sun, we get suntans... but when we get in front of Jesus in the Eucharist, we become saints” was one of his sayings.

He had a devotion to St Francis of Assisi, and this impelled him to get involved with the care of the poor and the destitute. He worked as a volunteer in a soup kitchen feeding the poor, and gave away money he was given to support the poor. Because of his young age, his mother had to go with him, and this and his genuine Christian life changed her. She said: “I was not the ideal model of a Catholic mother” when her son was born, and “was quite ignorant in faith things.” But through Carlo’s influence, she came back to the faith. “So little by little I started to get closer to the Church. I started to go back to Mass. And this was actually because of Carlo. Carlo was for me a kind of little ‘Saviour,’” she said.

At the age of 15, Carlo was diagnosed with acute leukaemia, and died in October 2006. To the surprise of many, his funeral was packed with poor people; the clients of the soup kitchen. Carlo and his mother had not told others about this side of his life.

He has been described as an ‘Influencer for God’. His mother said of him that he lived a very modern life, but for him, “the faith has always been the same for more than 2,000 years; that is, that God exists, he became incarnate, died and rose again for us.”

“So Carlo is also a messenger of this ... but bringing it into what is the modern world of young people, so he definitely has a lot to teach,” she said.

Can we, like St Ignatius, say of Blessed Carlo: “I too can do this”?

Notices of Interest

Confession: Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.

Repository - First communion and Confirmation: I have put a small display of cards & mementoes in the Foyer. People can help themselves whenever the Church is open & put payment in the wall box on the right of the Sacristy door. A member of staff will be present after Sunday Masses. **Please remember to observe the regulations on masks & spacing. Only touch items you intend to buy. Items will be cleaned & sanitised regularly. Stay Safe.**



We welcome into the family of the Church
Sofia Belova
who received Christian Baptism last week.
Please pray for her and her family.

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. For the time being we are asked to continue to fill in a paper form, but this may change when the electronic system has bedded in.

Prayer Course: Are you interested in finding out more about prayer? Whether you're new to it or whether you've been praying for years, there's always more to experience. Join us for the prayer course on zoom from Thurs 22 October, 8.00 to 9.30 pm, then every 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at the same time. To register & receive zoom details please email Maria: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

Financial Support for Self-Isolation: Please see the following article regarding financial help available for those who are self isolating;
<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/health/coronavirus/how-apply-self-isolation-financial-support-now-available-across-northamptonshire-3004756>

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/>

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School. If you have a child due to start primary school in September 2021, St Gregory's are welcoming parents to visit the school and see it in action. Contact 01604 403511 to arrange a visit. Closing date for place applications is 15th January 2021 at 5pm.

Thomas Becket Catholic Secondary School. If you have a child due to start secondary school in September 2021, contact the school office on 01604 493211 to arrange a tour. The closing date for place applications is 31st October 2020.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds.
Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish.

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

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church: week 7. "Holding onto joy in troubled times". Monday 2nd November, 7.30 pm. We are delighted to be joined by David Wells this week, an internationally renowned Catholic speaker who is funny, wise and always uplifting. Join us by clicking the link any time from 7.20 pm on Monday evening. As many of you know, David is a wonderful speaker: funny, humble and spiritual. He is speaking on joy, something we could all do with right now. In order to make this as easy to access as possible, we are releasing the YouTube link <https://youtu.be/MO1lzUv1AsM> meaning that people won't have to register, they can just go straight to the video. This is particularly recommended for first communion and confirmation parents, RCIA groups, in fact, for everyone!

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: From 9am to 12pm Thursdays. Please see the piece regarding heating and adoration

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 30th November, at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend to book your place.**

First Holy Communion 2020: We are happy to announce that enrolment for next year's programme for any child wishing to make their First Holy Communion who is in school year 3, 4, 5 or 6 will take place soon. The enrolment will be on line in December, so watch this space! At the moment we can't give any more details of how or when the preparation will take place but rest assured, it will!

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 21st November at 7.00 pm (Apologies for yet another change — this has been difficult!).

Parish Finances: As we increase our activities, & as colder weather approaches & we need to turn the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent through the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous.

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)**

Tip No. 108 Living sustainably with creation: Known as "15 minute city", vision. It encourages people to aim to live and work within fifteen minutes of each place. Countries around the world wish to counteract the lifestyle that puts a person in the car for an hour both morning and evening five days a week. Resulting in global warming from exhaust fumes and ten hours family time a week wasted.

Tip No. 109 Solidarity with the Poor: Many people around the world cannot afford or understand Personal Protection Equipment and rules to limit the spread of Covid. CAFOD supplies these, as well as drought resistant crops, dress making equipment and domestic animals that will make women self supporting.

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.

Scripture Readings 1st November 2020, All Saints

Films about "apocalypses" can lead us to misunderstand the book of Revelation. "Apocalypse" really means "revealing". Cosmic battles are raging all about us: evil seems to triumph in our world, yet this revelation of Christ gives us confidence (hope) that He will save us. The previous chapter ended by describing the coming terrible day of judgement (Dies irae). But in this chapter there is a pause while the elect – the chosen ones – are sealed with God's mark to show they will be protected. Not only many from Israel but numberless people from all nations. Our liturgies on earth have an effect in heaven. The chapter ends with the hope faith gives those who repent: "The Lamb ... will lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes".

This liturgical Psalm gives the moral requirements for assisting at divine worship, while confirming the hope the just may have in God.

The reading from John's first letter emphasises that we are already God's children, but we must try to prepare for the greater joy still to come.

In Matthew's Gospel the beatitudes bring the Commandments up to date: positive actions, not just avoiding doing wrong, are necessary for us to be counted among the elect.

Psalm Response:

**Such are the men
who seek your face, O Lord.**

(Rev 7:2-4,9-14; Ps 23(24):1-6; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12)

Chris Oliver

When icicles hang by the wall . . .

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness seems to have given way to winter very quickly, and the church heating is now on again. This presents us with the need to make decisions, because our present income, although through the summer has covered all our expenses, will not cover the cost of having the heating on at the level we have had in past years. This is particularly important in relation to Eucharistic Adoration.

It is virtually impossible to heat the entire church, the best we can hope to do is take the chill off, but this will not provide a comfortable environment for people to spend an hour or more in prayer. It is also difficult to concentrate on prayer when shivering!

Last year, in order to provide a more comfortable environment for adoration, we moved into the Sacristy. However, the maximum capacity there while observing social distancing would be about six.

It would be possible to maintain adoration on Thursdays if certain conditions could be met. First, a maximum of six people at any one time. Second, ideally two people would be designated as 'stewards'. Third, at least two people would be there at all times. Fourth, if there were already six people there, no more would be allowed to enter.

This week we will try this out. The sign-up sheet will have six spaces for each time-slot. Please make every effort to fulfil the slot for which you sign up, and if all six spaces are filled, please do not come at that time. This week it will remain ending at 12.00 noon, but if there are people willing and able to cover the afternoon, we hope to be able to extend it until 7.00 pm

Our Thursday Adoration is an important part of the spiritual and prayer-life of the parish, and during this time of pandemic, and with so many other issues needing prayer in the world, it would be wrong to reduce the time for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

However . . . over the past few weeks on days other than Thursdays, very few people have been coming to church in the late morning, and there have been stewards stewarding nobody. Therefore, from this week, the church will close at 10.30 am. We all owe a great debt of thanks to the stewards, and continue to hope that they will look after the church for the first session each day (8.45 to 10.30) each day, but on Thursdays will remain open until 12.00 noon.

(*"When icicles hang by the wall"*: from *'Loves Labours Lost'* by William Shakespeare; *"Mists and mellow fruitfulness"* from *"To Autumn"* by John Keats.)



Year of the Word continues.



The "Year of the Word", which has so rudely been interrupted by Coronavirus, has been extended. In fact, it was designated as 'A' Year of the Word, not as 'The' Year of the Word, because every year should be a year of the Word, indeed every day should be a day of the Word. There had been going to be a big celebration event at Thornton; plans are now being made for an event which will be mainly on line, but depending on restrictions in place at the time, might have local gatherings as well.

Many people have discovered the wonders of video-communication to keep in touch with their families and friends, to share in on-line Mass, in prayer-groups. Many older people have found this a life-line, but there are some (and not only the elderly) who do not feel confident in using such means. Anyone with access to the internet can use any of a number of different systems of communication. Teenagers are usually good at knowing how such things work. Sometimes technology can appear frightening, but please give it a go!

Next Monday the talk by David Wells (<https://youtu.be/MO1lzUv1AsM>) should be particularly worth-while. Just copy the link into the address-bar of your internet program or click the link if you are reading this on a computer. It will be live from 7.20 pm on Monday evening.

During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The December "Bible Alive" is now available — at £3.00, excellent value.

SECOND COLLECTIONS

13th September

4th October

11th October

18th October

15th November

29th November

13th December

20th December

Holy Places

CAFOD

Peter's Pence

World Mission

World Communications

Day for Life

Home Mission

Sea Sunday

