



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**

Christmas is coming!

A Christmas like no other we have seen.

Christmas Mass Times

Rather than have a booking system, there will be extra Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in the hope that we can find room for everyone who wants to come. However, we must adhere to the regulations carefully, and if the church should reach its maximum capacity, there will be a notice put up and the door will be closed.

Christmas Eve	5.00 pm 6.30 pm
Christmas Day	12.00 am (Midnight) 9.00 am 11.00 am 12.00 (Midday)
Feast of Stephen	10.00 am

Following government rules there cannot be any congregational singing, but some special Christmas music is planned. We need to have three stewards on duty at each Mass; would people be willing to act as steward for the Mass they intend to attend? Please email to Fr Andrew with your offers.

If you are worried about attending a Mass which might be more crowded, please remember that there is no obligation to come on the day itself; there are traditionally 12 days of Christmas, but the Church continues the Christmas season until January 10th, the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and Mass will be celebrated each day through the season. Mass each day will continue to be made available on the website and Facebook — only one of the Christmas Masses will be recorded.

Christmas Eve Experience

This is now fully booked; many thanks to Helen Furniss and her helpers in preparing this. In you are coming, remember:

- * wrap up warm
- * start at the steps at the front of the church at your appointed time
- * remember there are no toilet facilities
- * it's 15 minutes in total
- * please email stgregoryschristmaseve@outlook.com if you are unable to come.

Interactive Christmas Trail

Abington Park is this year playing host to an exciting interactive trail to find the meaning of Christmas. During festive walks around the park between December 16th and December 30th, families will be able to search for clues and scan QR codes to find the reason for the season.

This treasure hunt for children and families, uses a series of videos to encourage conversation and share thoughts on the Christmas story as they walk and explore. QR codes are very easy to scan and most modern phones can scan them just by taking a photo. There are also several free apps available to scan QR codes in most mobile app stores.

Christmas will undoubtedly be different for many of us this year and churches are called to respond differently. Several churches have joined forces to remind the community of their presence using this excellent resource from Scripture Union.

In addition to the trail, families will be able to see beautiful artistic displays in the following churches;

Abington Avenue United Reformed Church, Park Avenue Methodist Church, St Gregory the Great and the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Abington Park.

Our share in this is the visit of the shepherds which are displayed outside the main door of the church. Many thanks to Daniel Davighi, Cliff Snelling and Catherine Mulligan for the preparation of the figures.

There is a known problem which can occur when scanning QR codes while connected to BT internet. If this should happen, you are recommended to switch to mobile data instead.

Please keep safe

The number of infections in Northampton continues to rise; the hospital is very busy with COVID-19 cases, and the relaxation of the rules over Christmas might tempt us to mix more freely and be less careful. The best way to avoid the virus is to avoid meeting anyone who has the virus, and since we cannot know who is infectious and who isn't, maintaining social distance and not seeing people is clearly more sensible. Of course we want to see our friends at Christmas, but we want to see them next Christmas too, not hear of their illness or worse in January. In our Christmas Masses we shall pray for all those with whom we cannot be at this time.



20th December 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
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22 Park Avenue North
 Northampton. NN3 2HS
 Website: www.stgregory.org.uk

Priest:
 Fr Andrew Behrens ☎ 713015
 E-mail: priest@stgregory.org.uk
Deacons:
 Rev Michael Fleming ☎ 647750
 E-mail: mvf@btinternet.com
Pastoral Assistant:
 Maria Heath
 E-mail: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

Sunday <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i>	9.00 am	Mass	Nora Scott's Intentions
	11.00 am	Mass	The Parish
Monday Feria	9.00 am 10.30 am	Mass Funeral service	Margaret Muff RIP Teresa Becker RIP
Tuesday Feria	9.00 am 11.30 am	Mass Funeral service	Julie Moriarty RIP Florence McKeown RIP
Wednesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Breedagh Molland RIP
Thursday <i>Christmas Eve</i>	5.00 pm 6.30 pm	Vigil Mass Vigil Mass	The Parish Oliver O'Neill RIP
Friday <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 Absent friends
Saturday St. Stephen	10.00 am	Mass	Altar Servers
Sunday <i>The Holy Family</i>	9.00 am	Mass	The Parish
	11.00 am	Mass	Maria Azedo

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	Paul Greaves
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
Agnes McLoughlin	Breda Coleman
Mark Coleman	Colin Smith

Anniversaries:

May they Rest in Peace

John Morris	Ellen Winterhalder
Giovanna Scimeca	Alice Vogt
Ann Nightingale	Stanley Quest
Ronald Bonnett	Elizabeth Morrison
Louis Golding	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
Joan Darby	Michael O'Grady
William Coveney	Emily Glazebrook
Brian Donnelly	Douglas Golding
Thomas Billingham	Louisa Percival
Irene Hearne	Nancy Ginnelly
Vita Cohen	Doreen Bowers
Beatrice Bowers	Joseph Casey

The Church is open every day from 9.00 am until 10.30 am, and there will be Eucharistic Adoration on Thursday.

Your Offering To The Parish: Last Sunday's collection was £380.38. Thank you!
Standing Order gifts to the Parish: Each week £578 is given through standing orders.
Gift Aid benefits to the parish: The value of Gift Aid averages £209 per week.
Second Collection This Week: Sea Sunday
Cleaners This Week: There is no Church cleaning at the moment.
Counters This Week: CC & PS.

Readings for this Sunday

2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14-16. *The kingdom of David will always stand secure before the Lord.*
Romans 16: 25-27. *The mystery, which was kept secret for endless ages, is now made clear.*
Luke 1: 26-38. *Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son.*

Readings for next Sunday

Ecclesiasticus 3: 2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3: 12-21; Luke 2: 22-40. (Page 41)

During this season Migrants & Refugees; Expectant Mothers;
Of Advent, we are Open-ness to God's Word;
Asked to pray for The Bishop, Clergy & People of the Parish.

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.

Christmas Masses and Covid security

It is of the greatest importance that the church is a place of safety from the COVID virus, and while clergy and stewards do all they can to have systems in place, there is a responsibility on everyone to adhere to the government regulations and maintain the safety of everyone else as well as themselves in church. While 'bubbles' and households may sit together, there should be at least 1 metre distance separating those not in the same 'bubble' or household and must wear masks. **In the procession for Communion, 1 metre distance should be observed. This is particularly important the Christmas Masses, which may have greater numbers wishing to attend. If the church becomes full, we are not allowed to admit more people, and there is a risk that people may have to be turned away. In order to avoid this, in common with other churches, there will be additional Masses, an extra vigil Mass at 6.30 on Christmas Eve and an additional Mass on Christmas Day at 12 noon.**

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS
FOR DECEMBER

that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

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]*

Notices of Interest

Confessions before Christmas: There is opportunity for confession at St Gregory's after Mass any day by arrangement with Fr Andrew (preferably by email).

SPUC - Prayer Group; Help us save the lives of unborn children: SPUC Northampton is actively looking for people to join the local branch. We meet every few weeks in order to plan & arrange pro-life initiatives. This is a personal invitation for you to join us. We promise that there will be no pressure to do anything you are not comfortable with. If you are unable to join the branch how would you feel about being part of our prayer team? We are looking for people to form a prayer team who will support us through prayer on an ongoing basis & on special occasions. All we ask is that you spend some time in prayer in support of our pro-life work. This can be done in the comfort of your own home or with others in the group. If you would like to join the branch or join the prayer group please contact William on 07393965643 (text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com. Prayer is a very powerful weapon in the fight to save our unborn children and we beseech Our Lady of Guadalupe to intercede for us in this battle.

LUX.VALOUR Weekend: On Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st January 2021, we can all come together **online** for **LUX.Valour!** During our LUX.Valour weekend, we will be exploring what it means to be a young person of great bravery. How we can walk into the unknown of this New Year, confident that we are "not given a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power." 2 Timothy 1:7.
<https://nymo.org/lux-valour/>

COVID-19 Precautions We are in 'tier 2', & as responsible members of our community, we obey the Government Regulations in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives & livelihoods. Now that we can return to Mass, we must continue to try to suppress the spread of the virus & support those who remain vulnerable.
Face masks: Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

Repository: We have a stock of Calendars, diaries and Christmas cards available. If you wish to buy any, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.30am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go.

Bible Alive for December & January 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.

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.

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.

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church: The webinar series has been wonderful, and thank you to all who promoted it and came along throughout the series. We have had over 3,000 views! This is definitely something we will be looking to do again in the future. If you want to catch up with any you missed, all the videos are here: <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>

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

Christmas Flowers: Envelopes are available in the Display Area for donations for Christmas flowers, which may be given in memory of a person, in thanksgiving, or as a gift! Names of those in whose memory flowers are given will be included in the newsletter for Christmas. **As last year, arty crafty people are invited to do window displays - trays will be available after either Mass this Sunday.**

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.

Second Collections 2021: Please see the poster in the porch for next year's second collections.

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.

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>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 11th January, 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 2021: If you have a child who wishes to make their 1st Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at swatts49@outlook.com, who will note your name & the name & age of your child. This is still very much a first step as we are still unsure of how we can prepare the children at the moment; please be patient &, as soon as we possibly can, we'll give you more info about our programme & timings at which stage you can decide whether or not you wish to proceed.

Confirmation: Yet again we are thrown into confusion! We await more information. This continues to be difficult!

Parish Finances: As colder weather is here & 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 continue to be 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. 122 *Living sustainably with creation:* *suffering produces Endurance, which produces Character and Character produces Hope.*

Tip No. 123 *Solidarity with the Poor:* *inequality is a root cause of poverty today, be the change you want see in the world.*

Scripture Readings 20th December 2020, 4th Sunday of Advent, Year B

After seven years as King of Judah, David was anointed King of all the tribes of Israel. He then captured Jerusalem making it the capital of Israel. Then he increased his power by bringing into Jerusalem the Ark of the Covenant, the Lord's dwelling. But in our first reading the Lord tells David not to build a house for Him, because the Lord will himself build a house – ie a dynasty – founded on David.

The long Psalm, written during or after the exile, starts by reminding God of this promise to David, before asking God how long before He will fulfill His promise.

Paul summarises the Good News: Jesus Christ is the revelation that God intends all humanity to be brought into

community with God through faith. We are not justified and saved by the Jewish Law, but by Jesus' faith in his Father and by our faith in Jesus Christ.

Luke gives us the supreme example of faith: Mary agrees to God's invitation to be the mother of God's Son – the greatest 'Yes' in history! She does not know what might happen – except possibly death by stoning as an unmarried mother. By her faith and trust in God she becomes the first disciple. And God's promise to David is fulfilled.

Psalm Response:

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

(2 Sam 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16; Ps 88:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38)

Chris Oliver

Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris)

Pope Francis once noted that, like Mary in today's Gospel, we too can find ourselves at a loss. 'How will this come about in times so full of speculation? There is speculation about life, about work, about family. There is speculation about the poor and the migrants; there is speculation about young people and their future. When grief knocks at the doors . . . speculation abounds everywhere.'

The words of Pope Francis summarise the general atmosphere of uncertainty and frustration that the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on us today. It is worse still for the seafarers at sea. In all of this, the words from the angel to Mary 'Do not be afraid' should be a source of courage and strength to all. A phrase that offers assurance from God, comforting those at a difficult moment in life.

This Sunday we remember too that seafarers face difficult challenges daily. These challenges include stress, isolation and loneliness, separation from their families and loved ones due to the nature of their work; violent storms and bad weather situations at sea due to climate change; the threat of piracy. With COVID-19 restrictions in place in many ports, contracts may have been extended and seafarers face extra stress and anxiety, not knowing when they will be able to go home. Over 400,000 will no longer go home for Christmas as planned.

Like our Blessed Mother, they accepted their calling trusting in God, and when life becomes difficult, they often hold on to the angel Gabriel's words: 'Do not be afraid.'

Over 90% of the world's trade is conveyed by sea, thanks to seafarers. They are the heroes that keep the world economy going and sustained, yet they remain uncelebrated in most cases, if not forgotten. You can imagine what the world would look like without them. Stella Maris' committed Chaplains and volunteers offer them hope, friendship and hospitality and provide pastoral and welfare support to thousands of seafarers and fishers each year. They become friends of strangers, listen to their stories; offer guidance and comfort when the need arises.

The Annunciation and the birth of Christ are about giving; a celebration of God's self-giving to humanity. It teaches us the need to share with others. It also teaches us to trust in the Divine Providence of God to whom nothing is impossible. God will be with us in all the circumstances of life. Our generosity this Sunday echoes Mary's generous act of self-giving and will in no small way help to promote the spread of the Gospel, a culture of love, and to enhance the dignity of seafarers. Generosity comes from faith in God, and it is in giving that we receive.

Please keep Stella Maris and all the seafarers in your prayers.

The Vaccine Debate

The vaccine against COVID-19 is now being rolled out in Northampton, and with it, some have worries about its morality as well as a number of other questions.

This is a statement from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales:

"The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems.

Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness, and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate.

At present, debate concerns the use of the vaccines developed by Pfizer & BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca. Some have questioned the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine since it has been developed from cell-lines originating from the cells of an aborted foetus in 1983.

The [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) and the [Pontifical Academy of Life](#) have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this way, provided that there is a sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, we judge that this grave reason exists and that one does not sin by receiving the vaccine.

Both the Pfizer & BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have a different source since they are mRNA-based vaccines. On 2 December 2020, the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine was approved for use in the UK.

Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world.

Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves. In good conscience, one may refuse a particular vaccine but continues to have a duty to protect others from infection.

Right Reverend Richard Moth

Chair, Department of Social Justice

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales"

See also: <http://www.bioethics.org.uk/images/user/covidbriefing2.pdf> for a fuller explanation from the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, a Catholic research institute.

For other worries and scare stories see: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/54893437>

Conference of England and Wales declared this year 2020 as: THE GOD WHO SPEAKS: A YEAR OF THE WORD” and chose the theme in line with the spirit of the document, Verbum Domini. This initiative will be continued through 2021, not least because of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word

A Series of 3 Online Zoom Sessions exploring the upcoming Lectionary Readings and Seasons of the Liturgical Year. A valuable opportunity to develop our engagement with the Scriptures that we hear proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. Led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath is Adviser for Adult Faith Formation

Tuesday 17 November 2020, (7.30-8.30 pm) Preparing the Way for the Lord. Mark’s Gospel & The Season of Advent

Tuesday 19 January 2021, (7.30-8.30 pm) ‘He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures’ (Lk 24:45) The importance of God’s Word for Christian identity & everyday living

Tuesday 16 February 2021, 7.30-8.30 pm: ‘Many more began to believe in him because of his Word’ (John 4:41) John’s Gospel & The Season of Lent

Each session will include input, prayer and the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Cost: No charge but there will be the opportunity to make a donation. Please register in advance to secure a place by e mail or phone: email admin@nores.org.uk Once you booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions.



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

