



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 Chair of St Peter

Beyond the Papal Altar in St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, and below the wonderful window of the Holy Spirit, is the bronze representation of the chair of St Peter. So important is this piece of furniture that it is marked by a Feast Day in the Church calendar, and that feast falls next week on Tuesday, and every year on 22nd February.

What is so important about this chair? The visible bronze contains what was believed to be an actual chair used by St Peter, but is in fact mediaeval. It is not the actual chair that is of importance, but what that chair represents.

We have become familiar with the idea that the person who ‘chairs’ a meeting is called ‘the Chair’, although



that person has not become something to be sat upon. In describing a person as ‘chair’ we are recognising their role as directing the meeting. So St Peter was recognised as the ‘chair’ of the Apostles, and is recognised as the first Pope. The ‘Chair of St Peter’ is more about the office of the Pope than about the person of St Peter or any of his successors.

In honouring the Chair, we are respecting the unity of the Church. A meeting can only have one chair — otherwise it descends into chaos. Likewise, the Church can have only one focus of unity. The Pope follows on in succession to St Peter as the ‘chair’ of the Church.

A Cathedral is so named because it contains the ‘Cathedra’ (chair) of the bishop, in the sanctuary of the church, one of the three focal points is the chair of the celebrant of the Mass.

On Tuesday we celebrate the Church’s unity.

The Great Return

Last week in the Wednesday Bible Timeline course we studied the period of Old Testament history in which those who had been taken into exile in Babylon were able to return, and we thought about this in a number of ways, but among them, in relation to the way in which people are coming back to church as the pandemic subsides.

The exiles did not return from Babylon all at once, but over a period of nearly 100 years, beginning in 537 BC, which led to the re-building of the Temple which had been destroyed at the time of the deportation. (*Ezra 3:1-11*) This is matched by those who were first back to Church. The re-establishment of the life of worship had to come first — that is what the Church is for!

The second phase of the return from Babylon was about 17 years later, and this was marked by the solemn reading of the Book of the Law. (*Nehemiah 8:1-8*) We could relate this to the time when we were able to resume the readers’ rota — another step towards normality.

It was quite a bit later that the next phase began, which was the re-building of the walls of the city, which re-established the social community. This is an on-going project, but there is a gradual increase in the number of those coming through to the hall after the 9.00am Mass on Sundays.

There were those who were reluctant to return, and as Sr Anne Morris told us at the Liturgy to mark the Sunday of the Word of God, Isaiah chapter 55 is addressed to them:

“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters” (*Isaiah 55:1*)

“Seek the Lord while he may be found” (*Isaiah 55:6*)

“For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace” (*Isaiah 55:12*)

Some had become comfortable in Babylon, and were happy to stay there. Watching Mass on television may be comfortable, but it is no substitute for being there. “Listen carefully to me and eat what is good” (*Isaiah 55:2*).

Notices of Interest

THE BIG SLEEPOUT 2022!

Saturday 26th February from 7.30pm till Sunday 7.30am.
Siobhan O'Donovan and Lorna Heron are sleeping out this year.

Please can you sponsor them?

There are sponsorship forms at both doors if you would like to add your name. They both also have a Just Giving page if you would prefer to do it online!

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/siobhanbigssleepout2022>

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lornaheron>

Thank you all for your continuous support and generosity.

Siobhan & Lorna



We welcome into the family of the Church
Aleksander Budziszewski
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Bible Alive for February & March 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.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass and there is a small supply of St. Patrick's Day cards. We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass – all stock is marked, so an easy task! *Contact Kath.healey.789@ gmail.com*

A Free Lunch? There is no such thing, but there will be a free dinner on Tuesday evening, March 8th at 7.30 pm. There really is no catch, except that if you enjoy the evening, you may like to become involved in the Alpha programme. If you don't, no problem!

Next Alpha Dates: The next Alpha will begin on Tuesday April 26th, and be on Tuesday evenings until 12th July except during school half-term. (Also Friday to Saturday 17th to 18th June)

Tots @ St Gregory's: TINY TOTS look forward to seeing you: if you have charge of a pre-school child, from 9:30- 11:30 on a Tuesday morning, you are most welcome!

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

Parish Finances: Much the easiest way to support the parish financially is through a standing order directly from your own bank account. The information required for this 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)**

Parish and Diocesan Finances: There are still calculations to be done in relation to our financial contribution to the Diocese, but a rough estimate is that we will need to find a further £164 each week for this. Although we know the effect of the raised gas prices for domestic users, the Church as a charity is treated differently and the implications of the price rise are not yet clear. This will impact seriously on our parish finances. As fuller figures become available, they will be published and a parish budget for the coming year will be published. As we do this, it would be helpful if we all looked at our own personal and family giving to the Church. One significant help would be to make your giving through standing order; the details of our account are above, and if you pay income tax, please ask for a Gift Aid form.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 21st February, 7.00 pm. Please note 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: Confirmation classes will start soon. Confirmation will take place on Saturday 2nd July. Registration will open 13th March for two weeks. The course will commence thereafter.

Synod News! Thank you to everyone who participated in this; there will be a summary report of the conclusions from this parish shortly.

Gregory Care update on toiletry donations: Thank you to everyone who has donated toiletries and hygiene products to the Cathedral Food Store. The need continues and we are always grateful for basic items. We anticipate the need will increase and thanks to your support we have capacity to provide provisions to individual or families in need. So if you are aware of anyone who would benefit from this please get in contact with Gregory Care through Fr Andrew. Recently Revolution Zero have opened a community food larder (social supermarket) in the former UCR Church, The Headlands. Their aim is to make food accessible to everyone and reduce the amount of food going to landfill. 15 items of choice for £5. Please take a look at the link-<http://www.revolutionzero.org/> They have a Facebook page and are open:- Tues 1-3pm Wed 1-4pm Thur 1-3pm and Sat 11-12 noon.

Thank you again for amazing contributions and please keep this initiative in your prayers.

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

Choir Matters Change: by popular demand, our next practice will be after the 7pm Mass on Ash Wed (Mar 2) and will see the launch of our Holy Week & Easter programme; this date replaces Mar 4. After that it is business as usual: Fridays 1:45 - 3 pm: Mar 11, 18, 25, Apr 1 & 8. We are now blessed with a strong contingent of men singers but we need more ladies to keep the men in check & to replace others who have become unwell or simply had enough of me. *Alec*

Courses for Readers: The Bible Timeline course continues on Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. Last week we considered the time of the return from exile in Babylon and studied parts of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Next week we will be studying the time of the Maccabees. This is the last session in the Old Testament and sets the scene for the coming of the Messiah. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

Pivotal Players: We have come to the end of the first set of the Pivotal Players, but thanks to Bob Maine we can access the remaining sessions. They are not available on DVD, but Bob has an account which permits him to share them over Zoom. All being well, this week we will look at St Benedict, who was the founder of western Monasticism in the early sixth century, and inspired St Gregory. Please email Fr Andrew for the Zoom links.

Scripture Readings 20th February 2022, 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

In the first book of Samuel, Saul, Israel's first king, became unreasonably jealous of David, his anointed successor, and tried to kill him. Saul entered a cave where David and his men were hiding, but David merely cut off a piece of Saul's cloak. Then David crept into Saul's camp but only took away his spear. David believed it wrong to kill an anointed king, preferring to put his trust in God.

The Psalm offers grateful thanks and praise to God that his mercy is so great because of our frailty.

In last Sunday's reading Paul had insisted to the Corinthians that Christ's resurrection is essential to our faith. In today's reading Paul quotes Genesis saying that the first Adam became a living soul. But the last Adam, Christ, became a life-giving spirit.

Therefore, after the earthly man, there must be a heavenly man, whose body is animated by the Holy Spirit. Now we are modelled on the earthly man, subject to natural death. After the resurrection of the body we will be modelled on the heavenly man.

In Luke's Gospel Jesus takes David's restraint further: do good to your enemies, do not judge or condemn lest you suffer the same. In the Lord's Prayer we ask for forgiveness, but the pre-condition is that we forgive others.

Psalm Response: **The Lord is compassion and love.**

(1 Sam 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23; Ps 102(103); 1 Cor 15: 45-49; Luke 6: 27-38)

Chris Oliver

A way to say 'Thank you'

An Invitation to all who volunteer in the Parish

The parish could not function without the help of many, many volunteers who help in a vast number of different ways. Some are very obvious and can be seen; but others are 'behind the scenes' and less visible. We have been going through a tough time in many different ways, and this is a way of saying 'thank you'. On Friday March 18th there will be a dinner in the hall, to which all volunteers for the parish are invited. There is no charge – this is not a fund-raising occasion, no raffle, no collection plate, just an occasion for the parish to say thank you to all who give so generously. The only condition is that you RSVP to this invitation by email to Helen at helentme00@hotmail.com so that we know the numbers and can cater adequately. It will be a proper meal (don't eat first), but being a Friday, will not involve meat.

A Weekend Journey to Emmaus

(Milton Keynes): Saturday 12th – Sunday 13th March 2022 (£35)

A heart warming journey with Jesus as he explains the Scriptures.

The road to Emmaus must be walked by all who wish to evangelise, since our hearts must be burning with the fire of the Word, in order to touch others with our words. 'Emmaus' will:

- Deepen your appreciation of the Scriptures.
- Enable you to experience the power of the Word of God.
- Take you on a journey through the Old Testament and show how it is fulfilled in Jesus.
- Give you a burning desire to return from 'Emmaus' to 'Jerusalem' to announce your encounter with the Risen Lord.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/a-weekend-journey-to-emmaus-march-2022/>

James: Discerning God's Will

The course will take place over seven Wednesday evenings on Zoom, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm on: 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March, 6th, 20th, 27th April 2022. (£5)

The Letter of James is full of inspiration and practical wisdom which enables believers to discover and discern the way God calls them to live each day. Everyone who wants to share their faith with others needs to grow in their ability to hear God clearly.

Taking part in 'James' will:

- Deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Letter of St. James.
- Help you to learn how to discern your daily life in the light of the Word of God.
- Deepen your ability to hear and recognise the voice of the Lord.
- Provide principles for approaching the art of discernment.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/james-discerning-gods-will/>

Volunteers needed; but not until the weather is better!

A good team of painters and labourers needs to be assembled to repaint the side aisles. Each could be done inside a week with sufficient helpers.

There will be an appeal for volunteers, including some who are willing to work on the top of the scaffold tower.

In order to plan this, if anyone is willing to help, either as painter, labourer or tea-person, please can you contact Cliff Snelling at cliff.snelling@btinternet.com, indicating available weeks.

When we know which weeks are likely to have the most number of keen volunteers, we will decide when to swing into action.

St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which will 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:	April 26 th 2022:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	May 3 rd 2022:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	May 10 th 2022:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 17 th 2022:	How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session:	May 24 th 2022:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	June 7 th 2022:	How does God guide us?
Seventh Session:	June 14 th 2022:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day:	June 16 th – 17 th 2022:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 21 st 2022:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 28 th 2022:	Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session:	July 5 th 2022:	What about the Church?
Eleventh Session:	July 12 th 2022:	What about the rest of my life?

How Alpha Works — and Why

Alpha works because it uses the same methods that Jesus himself used. It uses personal contacts. Jesus said to Andrew: “Come and see” (*John 1:39*), and it is the same invitation that we make. Like Jesus, who so often in the Gospels is seen at a meal with others, Alpha is set in the context of a meal. It is not Mass, but could be seen as looking forward to when everyone at Alpha can share in the Eucharistic meal — what theologians call an ‘allegory’ of the Mass. St Paul speaks of ‘children in the faith’ not being ready for solid food (*1 Corinthians 3:1-2*), and Alpha is like coming to see Jesus in the person of some of his disciples. Having ‘come and seen’, people are free to make their own decision. Thankfully, many decide to get to know Jesus better. Alpha is also ideal for the Church community as it uses so many different talents and skills, and does not force people out of their ‘comfort zones’. It needs the talents of the cooking team; the team who prepare the room, the table hosts and table leaders. It needs the skill of the technicians, and of musicians. Above all, it needs the support of prayer, and it needs people to invite others to ‘come and see’.

DIocese of Northampton Liturgy Commission- Liturgical Formation

The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word



A Series of 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 the Liturgical Formation Team with presentations by Liz Clark, Fr Allan Jones CRIC, Mgr Kevin McGinnell & Fr Andrew Behrens

Wednesday 23 February 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)
Preparing for Lent

Wednesday 6 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)
Preparing for the Triduum

Wednesday 20 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)
Celebrating Eastertide

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 or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1)
Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions. Thank you.

(Photo from www.pexels.com)

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

*It's a huge undertaking,
but the Synod is getting
underway in our diocese.*

Synod 2021-23

- How we will manage our conversations in the parish will be announced soon. Pope Francis is clear that the voices of the loud and powerful and those with an axe to grind or a bee in their bonnet should not drown out the voice of the quiet and the marginalised.