



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 Ship of Christ

The image of the Church as a ship goes back to the very early days of the Church.

Speaking of the Gospel that we read today, the second century writer, Tertullian says

“that little ship did present a figure of the Church, in that she is disquieted in the sea, that is, in the world, by the waves, that is, by persecutions and temptations; the Lord, through patience, sleeping as it were, until, roused in their last extremities by the prayers of the saints, He checks the world, and restores tranquillity to His own.” (De Baptismo, chapter 12)

In the Apostolic Constitutions, dating from the 4th century there is a section on the assembly of the Church, describing it as a ship, in which the Bishop, deacons clergy and people are described as ‘sailors’ (Apostolic Constitutions, book 2, section 7), and in early Christian artistic depictions of the Church we see the imagery of a boat.

This is first expressed in recognising Noah’s Ark as a ‘type’ of the Church. We find this in Scripture:

“In the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And Baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you” (1 Peter 3:30-31)

(This understanding of ‘type’ is the recognition of events and people of the Old Testament pointing forward to the events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus or of the life of the Church. This was a common way or interpreting the Old Testament in the days of the early Church.)

This way of seeing the Church was echoed in the architecture of the oldest church buildings, as the Apostolic Constitutions, mentioned above, attests. The part of the building in which the people gathered was known as the ‘nave’, from the Latin ‘Navis’, meaning ‘boat’.

It is important to see this understanding as descriptive, like parables, and not definitions. The Church is like the ark as a vessel of salvation, but in other ways, is quite different. Noah and his family simply waited in the ark for the flood to subside; the ark was rudderless and without means of propulsion. The Church, on the other hand has both. She has the Scriptures for guidance, the Holy Spirit to put wind in her sails, and she has a full crew.

If we think of the ship as being at sea, we would not be expecting to pick up more passengers. However, that is because we are not used to seeing shipwrecks these days — mostly travel by boat is safe, and we should not think of the ark of the Church as a cruise liner!

Many who board the ship of Christ are victims of shipwreck in their life — not literally, but people who have endured some crisis and found that in the ship of Christ there is safety and security.

The Church must be careful not to be judgemental about those who have endured such a shipwreck. They may not have the ‘right papers’, their language may be riper than ours, they may be different in many ways, but we must still be a welcoming place for them.

In the hymn ‘Ave Maris Stella’, probably dating from the 9th century, Our Lady is depicted as a guiding star across the waters of life, as the sailors of those days before GPS used the stars to plot their course across the oceans, leading to the gate of heaven.

The Church has a destination, a reliable compass, a star to guide her and we are the crew! She also has a mission – to pick up those who need rescuing, which is potentially everybody, although there are many mariners across the ocean of life who don’t realise that their little boat is not fully sea-worthy, and may not wish to be rescued yet!

A more enigmatic verse than the hymn to our Lady is from the poem / song by Leonard Cohen ‘Suzanne’:

And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him
He said all men will be sailors then until the sea shall free them
But he himself was broken, long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human, he sank beneath your wisdom like a stone
And you want to travel with him, and you want to travel blind
And then you think maybe you’ll trust him
For he’s touched your perfect body with his mind

Exactly what was in the mind of Cohen when he wrote those words is not known. Is the ‘lonely wooden tower’ the Cross? Does ‘drowning’ refer to Baptism? Whatever that part of the verse means, the last three lines do speak a real truth. We do want to travel in the ship of Christ; we do trust him, and he has truly touched us.

The Apostleship of the Sea

For many years Tony Bull has been our parish representative for the Apostleship of the Sea, but now feels that someone younger could take this on. Bearing in mind the Gospel for today, and the fear that is part of the life of seafarers, both from the weather and the risk of shipwreck, but also from the difficult life that months at sea enforce, can someone take on this important ministry?

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for June & July 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.

Repository: A display of cards and items for First Communion has been added now that we know the dates. If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10am & speak to a Steward who will show you what to do & where to go.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place. The next preparation will be Monday 5th July, 7pm, in the Sacristy.

First Holy Communion 2021: The programme is running through 'Loom', an on line platform used by many schools. Parents need to 'home-school' children. The programme is called "Growing Up Catholic", and there are 6 sessions preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, followed by six sessions preparing for First Holy Communion.

Confirmation: At last we have a date: 1st October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux! The Confirmation will be at St Gregory's.

Adult Confirmandii: If you are one of our adult Confirmandii who started preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2020 with Fr. Jerry (Sacred Heart), please, if possible, would you attend a short meeting at Sacred Heart Church on **Sat. 26th June, 2.30pm**, regarding Confirmation.

2020 Confirmation Class (postponed due to Covid): All those who started the Confirmation sessions in **Jan 2020** & hope to be Confirmed later this year are to attend a Confirmation Class on **Sat. 26th June at 2.30pm**, Sacred Heart Church Hall. Please check your emails from the Team for details. Parents are also required to attend with their children at 2.30 pm for a short meeting. Thank you.

Readers at Mass: If anyone wishes to become a reader at Mass (Sundays and Weekdays), please contact Deacon Michael, which will enable us to prepare rotas for when some sort of normality returns!

Gregory Care Toiletries appeal update: Thank you for your continued support. Many thanks again for your generosity. We will keep you updated!

Bishop David has produced a series of short talks focussed on 'The Church'. These videos can be viewed on the Northampton Diocese YouTube channel. Simply type 'Northampton Diocese' into the search bar on YouTube and click on 'The Church' playlist. All the videos in this series so far will be displayed.

Mission Northampton: Mission Northampton will be based at the new St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral, but be a town-wide project involving all the parishes & Catholic schools in the town. It is being led by Fr David Donaghue, & there will be a variety of initiatives to seek to proclaim the Gospel, & make us all better missionary disciples. Please keep praying for it, & for our own parish, that we may become all that God wishes us to be, & that, like the first Christians, we may be devoted to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship, to the Breaking of Bread & to the prayers. May we all be truly missionary disciples, & this a missionary parish.

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

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Re-Envisioning Catechesis: The Church has recently produced a new version of the "Directory for Catechesis", which makes clear the link between evangelisation & the teaching of the Faith. One fruit of this is that the diocesan department for catechesis has been moved from NORES to the new department for Mission. To help those engaged in Sacramental preparation, there will be an on line course over 5 consecutive Thursday evenings, starting 17th June 7.30 pm (ending at 8.45 pm) on Zoom. If anyone would like to take part, please let Fr Andrew know (by email, please), and the parish will make the booking. NORES provides various opportunities for Adult Education; the course for catechists started last week, and there will be a webinar on "Mark and John and the Word of Life — The Church draws her life from the Eucharist" on Tuesday 13th July 2021, 7.30 pm – 8.30. To register please email admin@nores.org.uk.

CAFOD: As coronavirus brings devastation across India, CAFOD is working with Caritas India to provide vital support to poor communities. Already £200,000 has been pledged. This helps to distribute PPE kits to health workers, promote COVID & vaccine awareness campaigns, & set up safely run isolation & quarantine centres. You can donate online here: cafod.org.uk/give. Please pray for the people of India & all those affected by the pandemic.

Parish Finances: We have received the return from the Diocese showing our parish account in full. There has not been time to prepare a full statement of accounts yet, but we have benefitted from a substantial legacy from Violette Caillebotte, which will go a long way to pay for the building of the parish office when the diocese eventually gives permission for this. This must wait until the diocesan finances have recovered from COVID. St Gregory's has weathered this storm thanks to your wonderful generosity. The diocesan office does not have a parish to support it, but its essential work has to continue in supporting the parishes, schools and chaplaincies.

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)**

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.

The Catholicism Course: Following on from the Alpha course which has just finished, the "Catholicism" course will be run on Tuesday evenings through the summer, starting at 7.30. While it does form a continuous course, each session does stand alone, so if you have to miss one or more, you can dip in to those you can. It will run on Zoom to start with, and depending on changes to regulations and if the participants would prefer, could change to 'face to face' later. There are ten sessions:

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| 1 | July 6 th | The revelation of God become Man |
| 2 | July 20 th | The Teaching of Jesus |
| 3 | July 27 th | God, than whom nothing greater can be thought |
| 4 | August 3 rd | Mary, Mother of God |
| 5 | August 10 th | Peter and Paul; the first Missions |
| 6 | August 17 th | Christ and the Church |
| 7 | August 24 th | The Eucharist |
| 8 | August 31 st | The Communion of Saints |
| 9 | September 7 th | Prayer and the Life of the Spirit |
| 10 | September 14 th | The Last Things |

Scripture Readings 20th June 2021, 12th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B

Satan said that if Job lost all that he valued he would curse God. So Satan was permitted to test Job in this way. After losing everything Job laments his losses, asking why God has treated him – a just man – so badly. Eventually God answers at great length – a beautiful hymn of praise to God’s power over and in all creation, confirming that God is indeed “greater than any mortal”.

The psalm praises God for helping and rescuing storm-tossed seafarers.

The writer of the 2nd Letter to the Corinthians has said he would prefer to be with the Lord, who has rescued him from near despair, but nevertheless he accepts that he is required to do further work on earth. But in doing this he – and the Corinthians – must constantly have in mind the new creation they have become, now they know the risen Christ. So he does not lose heart, even though people might have thought God is no longer caring for him.

Job and the psalm provide a fitting background for Mark’s description of Jesus stilling the storm. But in Mark’s gospel the disciples do not understand: they cannot make the connection to the lesson learned so painfully by Job. They do not yet have faith that he will care for them – even when asleep! Understanding can come only after Jesus’ death on the cross.

Psalm Response: O give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever.

(Job 38: 1, 8-11; Ps106(107): 23-26, 28-31; 2 Cor 5: 14-17; Mark 4: 35-41)

Chris Oliver



We celebrate *Day for Life* on Sunday 20 June 2021. This day, inaugurated by Saint John Paul II, presents an opportunity to pray for the gift of life from conception to natural death, to raise awareness of the precious gift of life, and to support the work of protecting life in its most vulnerable stages through the annual collection. This assists pro-life organisations who raise awareness, engage in parliamentary work and pastoral outreach.

Global Pandemic

The fragility of life and the reality of death has been brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the UK alone, more than 126,000 people have died from Covid-19. Yet in the face of such suffering and death, we have also witnessed the extraordinary dedication of healthcare professionals and their loving care for the sick and dying. We too have each made sacrifices for the greater good during this pandemic. These acts of heroic love are a powerful testimony to the fundamental dignity of the human person and to the respect owed to each life, particularly through proper care and love in the last moments of life.

Assisted Dying

Against this backdrop of loving care, we are now faced with the very real threat of the legalisation of ‘assisted suicide’ in our country. It is not a question of ‘if’ this challenge will come, it is now a question of ‘when?’ There is now a Private Members Bill in the House of Lords on so-called ‘Assisted Dying’ and it is only a matter of time before the issue is back in the House of Commons.

This year’s theme for *Day for Life* focuses on assisted suicide and the respect owed to life. The online resources are produced to inform Catholics about this threat to life and to share with people our response to such a threat: a true compassion as the just response to the immense value of the human person.

Donate

Day for Life adds an authenticity to our witness to the dignity of life and this is enabled by the generosity of people in the pews supporting our work.

In 2020, we were unable to hold our annual ‘Day for Life’ collection due to the pandemic, our funds are very much depleted and the threats to life have never been greater.

Day for Life is a simple, practical response which pushes back against ‘the use and throwaway logic’ often at the heart of a culture which seeks to abandon its elderly, sick and dying when ‘they no longer serve our interests.’

Bishop John Sherrington

Kitchen Makeover Update

All of the initial construction and preparations down to the final lick of paint is complete. The next job is the new flooring and the contractor will complete it by Monday. Over the week-end there is a floor-levelling compound which is drying and must not be walked on. The new cooker has arrived; it is a large professional cooker, just what we need when cooking for large numbers such as we have on the Alpha course, but it is too big to go through the kitchen door. However we have a cunning plan! The next jobs will be to do the plumbing and to fit the new double sink, hand wash basin and cooker. After that the worktops can be installed, and here we need

help in giving them a thorough cleaning. Once installed then all of the equipment and crockery etc. can go back and the Church hall can be cleared and cleaned. If you can help with any of these jobs then please let me know.

Many thanks again to all the painters and everyone who has helped and contributed in so many ways with this extensive project

Cliff Snelling



Pregnancy Matters –

for confidential counselling, helpline: 0808 802 5433 or text Pregnancy Matters on: 07860 077 339.

Online and Text-to-Talk services can also be found via the [Life website](#).

Life: has been speaking out against abortion and offering a positive alternative to it since 1970.

[Using the Life website](#) you can find information and advice on: pregnancy-related problems; unexpected pregnancies; housing support; help and healing after abortion; pregnancy loss; helping someone else; resources and research; their campaigns; testimonials and blogs.



SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021



28th February	CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26th Feb)
2nd April	Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places
25th April	Diocesan Priests' Training Fund
16th May	Mass Media
20th June	Day for Life
27th June	Peter's Pence
11th July	Apostleship of the Sea
19th September	Home Mission Sunday
3rd October	CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1st October)
24th October	Mission Sunday
7th November	Bishop's Maintenance Fund
14th November	Sick & Retired Priests' Fund