



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

Christ, the Servant King

We are accustomed to the phrase ‘Christ the King’, but Bishop David, in re-constituting the administration of the Diocese, has organised the various departments and activities under three headings, ‘Priest’, ‘Prophet’ and ‘Servant-King’; three attributed of Christ himself, and three characteristics of all Baptised Christians.

For most of the population of this country, the word ‘King’ has not related to our present monarchy; we are still unaccustomed to “God save the King”, but our secular ideas of ‘kingship’ probably include palaces, thrones, many servants and wealth. When we speak of the kingship of Jesus, the addition of the word ‘servant’ is helpful to picture the true nature of his kingship.

When the Israelites asked to become a monarchy, Samuel warned them:

“These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots, and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plough his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take your male and female slaves and the best of your cattle and donkeys and put them to his work. He will take one tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves.”

(1 Samuel 8:11-17)

This is not the kingship of Jesus, our ‘servant-king’. When we were Baptised, and given the characteristics of Christ himself, we were called into this same vocation of ‘servant-king’. Jesus came as ‘one who serves’ (*Luke 22:27*), and we are called to equally to serve God and to serve the community.

The Vatican II document on the Church makes this abundantly clear.

“Now Christ has communicated this royal power to His disciples that they might be constituted in royal freedom and that by true penance and a holy life they might conquer the reign of sin in themselves. Further, He has shared this power so that serving Christ in their fellow men they might by humility and patience lead their brethren to that King for whom to serve is to reign. But the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom also by means of the laity, namely, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. In this kingdom creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. Clearly then a great promise and a great trust is committed to the disciples: “All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s”. (*1 Corinthians 3:23*) The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God. They must assist each other to live holier lives even in their daily occupations. In this way the world may be permeated by the spirit of Christ and it may more effectively fulfil its purpose in justice, charity and peace. The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfilment of this duty.”

(Vatican II, Lumen Gentium §36)

Our King wears a crown of thorns, and his throne is a cross. He not only feeds us, but offers himself as our food. But, having washed our feet, he then tells us that what he has done for us, we must do for others. (*John 13:14*) This does not necessarily mean a literal washing of feet, but it does mean offering service to others. This is done in a variety of ways, as needs and occasion arises.

Warm Welcome — Volunteers Needed

Last week we opened the hall on Mondays from after Mass until 1.00 pm, and on Wednesdays from after Mass until 2.30 pm. A small group of volunteers has got the process up and running, but it would not be fair to leave it just to them.

Anyone who would be willing to help is invited simply to come to the hall any time when it is open on a Monday or a Wednesday and talk to the existing volunteers to see how and when you can help.

Volunteers are asked in the first place simply to be there, and to offer welcome. One of the volunteers needs to be in the kitchen

providing tea, coffee or soft drinks, but any further volunteers would be there to ensure that all who come are made welcome.

At lunch-time there will be an offer of soup and a roll, and volunteers will be offered that as well, but this will generate a need for washing up and then at the end of the session, the hall must be left tidy for the next users.

Please see this as a way of exercising your Baptismal role as ‘Servant-King’, and fulfilling Christ’s command to us give ‘even a cup of cold water’ . . . (*Matthew 10:42*).

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for November 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 – Catholic Diaries for 2023 are now available, as are Christmas cards and mementos! 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*

Christmas Cards: With the very high cost of postage, you are welcome to leave Christmas Cards for people who attend St Gregory's Church on the table at the back of church. However, **PLEASE** do not just write the Christian name on the envelope!

Thursday Holy Hour and Adoration: As a trial, Holy Hour will be a Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. However, this can only continue if there are sufficient numbers to sustain it. No one is expected to remain for the entire two hours, come for as long as you can or want to.

Advent Retreat 1: Saturday 3rd December, St Gregory's Church, 3.00 pm – 6.00 pm; given by Fr Rajan Fausto (Evangelist from Rome): "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the Glory of the Lord rises upon you. All welcome.

Advent Retreat 2: Saturday 10th December, St Gregory's Church, 22 Park Avenue North. Starts with Mass at 9am & ends at 4pm. Please bring packed lunch. "The New & Perpetual Pentecost, the coming era of peace. A new springtime for the Church". Derek Williams, catholic lay evangelist, will give a retreat on the gift of living in the Divine Will, a new dawn for the Church. All are welcome.

Flowers for Christmas: The usual envelopes for donations for Christmas flowers will be available from next week

Safe Haven is starting a Monday Coffee Morning group at Great Houghton Village Hall for the Afghan ladies who are living in Northampton, The Holiday Inn. We would appreciate some volunteers to assist on a rota basis. If interested please contact Aileen Fogarty. Firstaid.k@btinternet.com Tel 01604630546

Church Heating: The Church heating has to be on for two hours before it even begins to warm up, so not running it for weekday Mass is a way of making a considerable saving. Please come in warm clothing! We will heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

The God who Speaks: The 'Year of the Word' continues and the Diocesan Bible Study sessions for the Sunday Mass readings are continuing. There will be a session on 'Preparing for Advent and Christmas' on 23rd November and in January there will be an introduction to the Year of Matthew (Year A in the lectionary)

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 16th Jan at 7pm in the Sacristy. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Important Dates for First Communion Families: Congratulations to all children who have enrolled on the First Holy Communion programme. You will now have all the dates of sessions. Please try to attend them all, and please enjoy the course!

Confirmation in 2023: Please watch this space for information.

Missio Donors/ Red Box holders: Calendars for 2023 are free and will be available for collection at church early December. New supporters of Missio to help spread the missionary work of the Church are always welcome. For further information speak to the clergy or Dorothy (9:00 Mass) or Alec (11:00 Mass).

In honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary there will be 24 hours of Exposition at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Adoration will start after the 10.30 Mass on Wednesday 7th December and will conclude with 9.30 am Mass on Thursday. If you can commit to an hour please phone Gillian on 07724337202 or just come along. Thank you.

Choir Matters: Weekly practices for Christmas etc will continue to be after 11:00 Sunday Mass till 1pm sharp at the latest. *Alec*

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

A course on the Psalms: It is sub-titled "The School of Prayer", with the invitation to 'learn to pray like Christ'. Continues.

Memorial Mass: On Sat. 17th December, 11am, there will be a Celebratory Mass for Philip Ndekwe RIP. All welcome.

Tots @ St Gregory's: We have re-started: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!!

St Gregory's Brownies: St Gregory's has a Brownie Unit, who meet in the hall on Wednesday evenings. We have some spaces due to some of our girls going up to Guides and would love to meet some new prospective Brownies. We are all aged between 7 and 10 years, and please get in touch with the leaders on tw.lewis@ntlworld.com for more information or a little chat.

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

Save the Date: Saturday 18th March 2023 Encounter Northampton, a day hosted by Mission Northampton in St Gregory's Hall from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. More details later!

Flame 2023: The theme of Flame 2023 – which is exactly 150 days before World Youth Day in Lisbon – takes the WYD Scripture "Mary arose and went with haste" and crystallises it into the theme, "Rise Up!" Rise up after the pandemic, Rise up as young Catholics, Rise up – as Mary did – for the surprising and beautiful adventure that is our Catholic faith. **Sat 4th March 23 - book the date - more details soon**

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)**

Refreshment Donations: Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: **The Hope Centre**
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday: **Gregory Care**
Through Lent and Eastertide: **CAFOD**
Ordinary Time until the end of August: **Refreshment Fund**
September until the Harvest collection: **CAFOD**
After harvest until the beginning of Advent: **The Bible Society**

Prayers for Ukraine: Please continue to pray for an end to the war in Ukraine:

O God, author and lover of peace,
to know you is to live,
to serve you is to reign.
Defend against every attack
those who cry to you
so that we, who trust in your protection,
may not fear the weapons of any foe.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen

Scripture Readings 24th November 2019, Christ the King, Year C

The Books of Samuel, Kings and Judges, tell of Israel's history from when they entered Canaan about 1200 BC, up to their exile to Babylon in 587 BC. After the death of Saul, David became King of Judah. In today's key reading David then becomes King of all Israel. He goes on to capture the 1,000 year-old city of Jerusalem, and makes it his capital. He then brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, making it also Israel's religious centre.

The Psalm celebrates arriving in Jerusalem, goal of pilgrims and seat of government.

The letter to the Colossians was written because they thought that angelic beings and other spiritual powers were either rivals to Christ or were needed to supplement Christ's work. Paul says this detracts from the person of Jesus Christ, who possesses the totality of power needed to gain our freedom, "the forgiveness of

sins". The hymn praises Christ, who is the image of the unseen God. He existed before all things, which were created in him, and He is supreme over all creation. He has reconciled all things, the whole cosmos, by "the blood of the Cross".

In Luke's Gospel the crucified Jesus is recognised as King, both by the good thief and in the inscription written by Pilate, a Gentile.

Psalm Response: **I rejoiced when I heard them say: "Let us go to God's house".**

(2 Sam 5:1-3 Ps 121(122) Col 1:12-20 Lk 23:35-43)

Chris Oliver

This Alpha nearly over

Each Alpha group is different and each has its own particular 'feel'. While there is always a sense of joy about the evenings, no two Alphas are identical. Each of the members of the group makes their own unique contribution to the total experience. One characteristic of every Alpha group however is joy and laughter.

One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is joy (*Galatians 5:22*), and Jesus offers us his joy; a joy that is complete. (*John 15:11*)

Some people understand Christianity as a series of "Thou shalt nots", in which anything that brings happiness and joy is forbidden. This was not the message of Jesus

St Paul, writing to the Philippians says that he wants us to be joyful. (*Philippians 4:4*) Alpha is a way of seeking to share that joy with others. It is completely free, but donations are cheerfully accepted for the delicious meal which is served at every session. For catering purposes, please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha

First session:	September 20th 2022:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	September 27th 2022:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	October 4th 2022:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	October 11th 2022:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	October 18th 2022:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	October 25th 2022:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	November 8th 2022:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	November 11th - 12th:	Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do? How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? How can I make the most of the rest of my life?
Eighth Session:	November 15th 2022:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	November 22nd 2022:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	November 29th 2022:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	December 6th 2022:	What about the Church?

What makes a Good Christmas

The word 'Christmas' is made up of two words; 'Christ' and 'Mass'. Christmas without both Christ and Mass is . . . nothing! Yet, for many people, neither of these feature in the plans for their celebration. For the Christian, these two will be the first priorities for our celebration.

Many say that Christmas is about family, and it is the time when families get together and enjoy their company. It can only be about family because it is about the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Shop-keepers look forward to many customers leading up to Christmas, and for them, a good Christmas is when those customers spend a lot of money.

For some it is the season of the Office Party, and the consumption of much alcohol.

For children it is about receiving many presents, and for parents, choosing and buying.

For some it is a time of loneliness, missing someone they love, and in the present time of hardship, it may be a time of regret.

This year we are warned that it will be a season of austerity. That does not mean that it will be a season of misery; true joyfulness is not measured by how much money is spent, but rather by how much love is shown.

Christmas is sometimes called the 'Season of Goodwill', and of all the gifts for which we could ask at this time, the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control) could be the most useful.

A 'Good' Christmas is not measured by how much money is spent or how many presents are received or given. The Christmas gift is that of Christ himself, given to us by God, and received by us in the form of the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments.

The 'Goodness' of Christmas is measured in the goodness of our life, and the way in which we are able to reveal God's loving goodness in our own life.

Many of us will be singing 'Good King Wenceslas' over the coming season. His goodness was revealed in his helping someone else to have a good meal. One way in which we can 'bless the poor' is in buying a Christmas Gift Card for the Cathedral Foodstore.

The Funeral Mass for Mgr Tony McDermott will be at the Cathedral on Friday 25th November at 11.00 am. May he rest in Peace.