



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.”**

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VISION

We are the sheep of his flock

So writes the psalmist (*Psalms 99:3*) and he is the Good Shepherd. But this is picture language, and St John, in the New Covenant tells us that we have an even closer relationship; we are called God's children, because that is what we are. (*1 John 3:1*)

We are not just called God's children in the sense that being a child of God is what we are, we are also *called*.

Called by name.

We have a 'Christian Name'. Nowadays official forms speak of a 'forename', but for us, the name by which we are known to God is important — it is our Christian Name. When Mary of Magdala meets the man she supposes to be the gardener, it is only when he greets her by name that she recognises him. Jesus gives Levi the new name of Matthew and Simon becomes Peter.

Our names are special and precious to us, and God knows us by name. At our Baptism we were given that name, and it is precious because we are precious to God. Every hair on our head is counted. (*Matthew 10:30*)

Above all, we should rejoice that our names have been written in heaven. (*Luke 10:20*)

Called to follow

It was by name that Samuel was called in the Temple, even though at first he did not recognise the voice of the Lord.

One of the most common things we hear Jesus say in the Gospels is "Follow me". He has said that to each one of us: to be a disciple is to be a follower of Jesus.

To follow means that we have to move - ie we are not moving we are not following, we are straggling, or worse, we have just been left behind. The shepherds in Israel lead their flocks, they do not push them from behind. The sheep know the Shepherd's voice (*John 10:3*). They hear his voice and they follow him. (*John 10:27*)

The Latin for 'to call' is 'vocare', from which we get the word 'vocation'. This is something that all people have; we are all called, we all have a vocation. Vocation is not limited to priesthood, diaconate and religious life. Some are called to the caring professions; nursing or social work for example. Others to teaching. Some are called to marriage and parenthood, others to a single life. Some are called to work in industry to provide the goods that are needed, some to work in commerce to provide the means of distribution of those goods and the remuneration of those who make them.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the 'vocation to holiness', echoing the teaching of Vatican II

All the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.

(*Lumen Gentium §40*)

This vocation to holiness is not a particular vocation, it is universal and general. We all have this vocation. It is, however, worked out in many different ways, particular to each individual, just as we are all given different talents, different gifts, so we are called to different tasks within God's plan for salvation.

Called to serve

St John Henry Newman wrote:

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about.

On this day we are asked to pray that all those whom God is calling to serve him in priesthood or any other particular ministry in the Church will respond to their call with love, generosity and faithfulness, and that all people will prayerfully seek out the 'definite service' that God has called them to do. This week Fr Andrew is at the Villa of the English College at Palazzola, and will be praying for those who are in formation there to serve in the Priesthood. But we must also pray that those who are called to other vocations in the Church may fulfil whatever ministry to which God is calling them.

We have Jesus' promise that he is with us to the end of time. He will never let us down, but those to whom he is calling must hear his voice, and follow him.

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Jayden Kamsiyochukwu Obieze
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Cards and items for First Communion and Confirmation are available. Red Communion ties are here & cost £6. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

Bible Alive for May is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church

Coming Events (for your diary):

Saturday 27th April: Pro-Life Life Chain on St Peters Way, 11.00 – 1.00
Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*
Friday 19th to Saturday 20th July: 40 Hours Adoration at St Gregory's

Missio's National Director, Fr Anthony, wrote: 'Whenever I have a meeting with Pope Francis, he thanks us for the work we do to create a missionary spirit in parishes & support the growth of church communities in mission areas of the world. The Holy Father considers us all special collaborators in promoting the mission of the Church. We face difficult & challenging times, so my personal thanks is my belief that all you are doing in your parish to ensure the Red Box scheme continues will bear fruit through prayer, perseverance, & the blessing of Pope Francis. In 2023, England & Wales gave over £2m through the Red Box (in boxes & giving directly via Direct Debits, cheques & online). In Northampton Diocese, over £70k was raised. St. Gregory's raised £3889.12 in 2023 through the Red Boxes.' Of the 90 or so parishes in our Diocese, our contribution was the highest! God bless you all for your continued impressive generosity and prayers. *Alec & Dorothy.*

The National Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors takes place on Tuesday 30th April 2024. There will be a second collection on the following weekend, the sixth Sunday of Easter with proceeds going to the healing garden at our Cathedral.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 27th May 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 2023/4: All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

Confirmation in 2024: There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk for further information.

Next Alpha will be after Easter:

First session:	April 16th:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	April 23rd:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	April 30th:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 7th:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	May 14th:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 21st:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	June 4th:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	June 8th:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 11th:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 18th:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 25th:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	July 2nd:	What about the Church?

Tots @ St Gregory's: St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10am-12 pm.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – 27th April**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

Fire Safety: Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on the trays under the places for candles and candles must not be stacked one on top of another.

Diocesan Music Day Sat. 11th May 11am-3.30pm, Thomas Beckett School. For Singers & Choirs – see poster for full details.

Care for our environment: Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1st to October 4th, and this has now become a celebration shared by other Christians as well. Within our own local area, it would be good if Christians could work together to try to bring about a greater understanding and respect for God's creation. Issues like clean air, fly-tipping and care of the green spaces (Abington Park, Eastfield Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Vale Park, Wilson's Orchard, Billing Road Cemetery). If anyone is interested in these, or other environmental issues, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

Choir Notes: next practice is Saturday 4 May, 11:00-12:30. There are vacancies for new members, especially ladies. *Alec*

Pro Life Chain – Saturday 27th April 2024: Saturday 27th April, between 11am & 1pm, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. If you can join us or want more information, then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com

Stella Maris: Thank you so much everyone for your generosity to the Stella Maris Seafarers Charity! It seems like a week doesn't go by where a bag of wool or woolly hats hasn't been left in the sacristy. One Chaplin recently told me that "Giving them woolly hats not only help keep them warm. It is much more. It reminds them that someone is thinking of them." God Bless and again Thank you! Bob <https://stellamaris.org.uk/>



Diocesan Pilgrimages: There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8th June (leaving 8am sharp), and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23rd Aug to Friday 30th Aug. Booking details for both will follow shortly.

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



For Sale: Small plaques of the church, gift-boxed, artist hand-made, a limited number available in the repository. £5 for Gregory Care.

Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:

Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war:
**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**

Sunday 21st April: 4th Sunday of Eastertide, Year B

After healing the cripple in Jesus' name and calling on the people to repent, Peter and John were put in prison overnight. Peter then repeats his preaching to the Jewish leaders. The leaders cannot deny "a notable miracle has been worked". Undecided, they order the Apostles not to speak in Jesus' name again, and release them without punishing them – at least this time.

The Psalm is from the Passover Psalm heard on Easter Sunday, thanking and praising God for repeatedly saving us.

John's first letter insists that the love the Father has given us makes us his children now, anticipating already in some way what we shall be "when he appears". John goes on to contrast the righteous who do not sin with those who commit sin. You are either for God or against him – there is nothing between.

In John's gospel, after healing the man born blind, Jesus describes himself both as the door through which we can enter and be saved, and also as the good shepherd, whom the sheep know and follow. In contrast to the false shepherds criticised by Ezekiel, the good shepherd cares for his sheep, even at the cost of his life. Jesus emphasises that he is in control of his life, causing division among the Jews.

Psalm Response: **The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

(Acts 4: 8-12 ; Ps 117(118); 1 John 3: 1-2 ; John 10: 11-18)

Chris Oliver

Curiouser and curiouser

These words are at the beginning of chapter 2 of 'Alice in Wonderland'. She has just fallen down the rabbit-hole where she found the drink to make her smaller and the cake to make her big again. She has been trying to get through a tiny door which led into a garden: 'the loveliest garden you ever saw'.

Heaven is often depicted as a garden, a garden into which we hope to enter eventually, but there is also a state of contentment and spiritual peace which we seek in this life.

Alice, unable to enter this garden, sat down and cried. However, her self-pity did not help her to get into that garden.

Mankind has been on a search for 'the good life' for as long as we have records on human life. It has been a large part of the study of philosophy, and, of course, of religion. This curiosity can get us on the road to finding answers; self-pity cannot.

We can get some distance in the journey towards this life through human reason; the discovery of 'divine natural law'. An obvious example is the principle that we should not do to others anything that we would not want done to ourselves. God has given us the capacity work this out for ourselves.

However, the experience of mankind is that this is not sufficient for us to fully experience that state of perfect bliss

God has given us principles to live by through the revelation to the world of his Word, delivered by the Holy Spirit to the prophets of the Old Testament and supremely, through the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. This is called 'Divine Revealed Law'.

In Jesus we have the complete revelation of God, but in order for us to understand this revelation, he has given the Holy Spirit to 'guide us into all truth'. (*John 16:13*)

Alice began by crying in self-pity, and nearly drowned in her tears. Alternatively, we can exercise our curiosity, and seek a deeper understanding of the message of Jesus.

There are many opportunities for satisfying curiosity in this season of Mystagogia; among them, the Alpha Course which started last Tuesday, but it is not too late to join and runs on Tuesday evenings on the dates listed opposite is suitable for everyone, and examines the basics of the Christian Faith. There is the Re: New series of meetings on Saturdays at the Cathedral Hall.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7.00 am on Friday 19th July until 11.00 pm on Saturday 20th July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.

Donorbox: St. Gregory's has signed up with Donorbox to enable people to make donations to the Church via a QR code. This is a safe & easy way of making a one-off donation without having to have cash on you!

If you have a smartphone, just point your camera at the QR code, click the link & the site will see you through the donation process. There is a larger version of this QR code in the Narthex area and in the hall for refreshment donations!



Bishop David is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org

Caspar

This system is being rolled out across the diocese, The only essential information is your name and email address, although your home address and telephone number are useful, and a photo always helps! To comply with GDPR, each adult person must fill in their own registration form.

I hope that this will improve our communication, but that depends on our data being correct and up-to-date. Please help us to do this.



Parish Registration

We will soon be using a new computer system to help us manage our parish better. It starts with us making sure that we have up to date contact information for all of our parishioners and so we would be grateful if you could complete the registration form by clicking on this QR code or by typing the link into your browser.

www.caspar.church/me?ID=56067



If you don't have an email address, please speak to the parish who can complete the form on your behalf.