



# 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



## Pastoral Letter from Bishop David Fifth Sunday of Lent 21 March 2021 On the Paschal Mystery

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we hear Jesus say these words, ‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified’. Our Lord is not stumbling towards the events of Holy Week, but resolutely responding to his heavenly Father’s will. He knows that ‘unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.’ Within this simple agricultural image, there is a dying and a profoundly new fruitful life.

Perhaps we are used to the idea that God saved us through the Paschal Mystery; this is the dying and rising of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. But what does this mean for us today? Is all this just a complicated theological idea, something which took place in the past, or is this lived experience? We may know in our heads something of the doctrine. Do we know in our hearts, experience of sharing in the new life Jesus has won for us?

We are redeemed by the blood of Christ! This means our Saviour has paid a price for us. We recognise our human weaknesses, but then tell ourselves there is little to be done about the state we find ourselves in. Recognising that a ransom has been paid for us means we can rejoice in this truth, that our God wants us to enjoy the freedom and new life which is his desire for us. The Cross is God’s weapon against our fallen human nature. The Lord never gave up on us, and saving grace has real power to work in every situation of our lives. Jesus nailed to the Cross all our sins. And since this event, many have experienced the power of Christ’s sacrifice to change their everyday lives. For sure, this is a life-long journey, but we are encouraged by the small steps we make in discipleship when we seek the living power of Christ’s blood to transform our lives. The Cross has real authority to change real lives. The sacrifice of Christ’s blood can also change communities and institutions, structures and organisations.

The resurrection of Jesus has won new life for us. Maybe we are inclined to believe this event is simply historical fact, but certainly does not touch my life today. The apostle Paul puts the whole truth of Easter in these words, ‘If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.’ (*Romans 8.11*) Imagine that! The same power which raised Jesus’ dead body on Easter Sunday is at work in our lives today through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We experience the glory of the Paschal Mystery, our own personal share in Christ’s death, resurrection and the gift of Pentecost, when we gather together to celebrate the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here we are present at Calvary, at the empty tomb, in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through receiving Holy Communion, sacramentally or spiritually, we are filled with the force of these saving events. When we are faced with temptation and sin, and we reach out to receive God’s all-embracing mercy in the Sacrament of Penance, we imbibe the power of Jesus’ dying and rising.

And so we might say of the resurrection, Christ alive has real authority to change real lives. The Holy Spirit can also change communities in institutions, structures and organisations. Fine talk, so let’s bring all this nearer to home. What does it look like for you and me to receive the grace which flows from the Cross, to step through faith into the life of Easter, to be open to the Holy Spirit at work in our diocese, in our parish and other communities? It means that everything we do as a local church, is about mission, about reaching out to others in a variety of different ways and with a variety of gifts. And so I pray that each and every one of us may experience the outpouring of blessings which flow from the Paschal Mystery. Only when I witness joy-filled communities reaching out to others to share with them what we ourselves have received, will I know my prayer has been answered.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+ *David*

Bishop of Northampton

**Please note: from this Sunday until the end of restrictions,  
there will be an additional Sunday Mass at 12.00 noon.**



# Notices of Interest

**Bible Alive** for Lent & Easter 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:** 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. Easter cards now available.

**Easter Flower Donations:** Envelopes are available in the Foyer for donations for Easter 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 Easter.

**CAFOD "Walk for Water":** Johann Kastern has taken up the challenge, and would like sponsorship. Please see his page: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/walk-for-water1375>

**Parish Finances:** Thank you to everyone who has been so very generous during this lockdown. Our parish finances are reasonably stable. Your generosity is much appreciated!

**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)

**Masses and Covid security in Lockdown:** It is of the greatest importance that the church is a place of safety from the COVID virus, & while clergy & stewards do all they can to have systems in place, there is a responsibility on everyone to adhere to government regulations & maintain the safety of **everyone** as well as themselves in church. While 'bubbles' & households may sit together, there should be at least 1 metre distance separating those not in the same 'bubble' or household & must wear masks. We are still allowed to come to Mass; this is in part because churches are safe places. It is up to us to keep the church safe.

**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.

**Red Box/Missio contributors:** Please be aware that you may receive a phone call in the coming weeks about Gift Aid and other ways of supporting our Foreign Missions financially. The call will come from your Promoter or from Dorothy or Alec. Keep those on the front line in your prayers. God bless. Alec (622153)

**Being a Dynamic Catholic:** Through Lent there are regular talks on the parish website and Facebook page based on a book entitled "Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic" by Matthew Kelly. This could form part of a Lockdown Lent discipline.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

**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.

**Right to Life:** A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. There is an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP, and ask them to sign this motion asking for new guidance on fetal pain: [www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion)

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

**First Holy Communion 2021:** The programme has started and 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. It is important that the first six sessions are completed by the end of the Easter holidays. Please email Stella at [swatts49@outlook.com](mailto:swatts49@outlook.com), for last-minute registration.

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

## **THE ARCHBISHOPS OF WESTMINSTER AND LIVERPOOL HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST LOCKDOWN**

**Tuesday 23rd March is a National Day of Reflection to mark the anniversary of the first national lockdown with a minute's silence at midday and doorstep vigils of light at 8pm.**

This is not only a Day of Reflection but also a Day of Prayer. In reflection we ponder on all that has taken place; in prayer we bring this to our Heavenly Father. At St Gregory's there will be Holy Hour after Mass, from 9.30 to 10.30. For all who live by faith in God, reflection and prayer always go hand in hand. Prayer completes reflection. Reflection informs prayer. Prayer opens our life to its true horizon. Without prayer we live in a foreshortened world and are more easily swamped by its clamour and tragedy. Throughout this difficult year, so many have been inspired by prayer, so much effort sustained in prayer, in every place. So let us make the 23<sup>rd</sup> March truly a day of prayer.

There is so much on which to reflect and include in our prayer. We reflect in sorrow on all those who have died, whether family members, friends or those unknown to us personally. We pray for them, asking our Father to welcome them into their heavenly home, the destiny for which God first gave us the gift of life. We reflect with compassion on all those who have suffered during this last year, whether through illness, stress, financial disaster or family tensions. We pray for their ongoing resilience, courage and capacity to forgive.

We reflect with thanksgiving for the generosity, inventiveness, self-sacrifice and determination shown by so many in this most difficult of times. We pray for them, thanking God for their gifts and dedication, whether they are scientists, politicians, health workers, public servants of every kind, community leaders or steadfast family members and friends who continue to show such love and compassion. We reflect in hope that, as the pandemic is controlled and we open up our lives again, we will gather in the lessons we have learned and build our society into a better shape, more compassionate, less marked by inequalities, more responsive to needs and deprivation. We ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us in this endeavour, whether we are focussing on overcoming family breakdowns, economic recovery, or building political consensus.

Christian prayer is, of course, centred on Jesus Christ, the one who is "lifted up" before us "so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3.13). We pray with Jesus, in him and through him, for he is the one who carries us, and our prayers, into the embracing presence of his Father. He is our comfort in sorrow, our strength in the face of need, our rejoicing in the gifts we celebrate and our hope in the face of the weighty darkness of death.

May Tuesday 23rd March be a great day of prayer that this pandemic comes to an end and that the gift of God's Holy Spirit will carry us all forward to a new and better life, both here and in the world to come.

# Scripture Readings 21st March 2021, 5th Sunday of Lent, Year B

Jeremiah warned Israel against their idolatry and failure to respond to God's love, breaking God's covenant. At the time of the exile to Babylon Jeremiah proclaimed this great oracle of the "New Covenant", promising that God's Law will be written on men's hearts, giving them for ever the power – or "grace" – to respond with love to God's love.

This most famous penitential Psalm echoes David's humble admission of his sin with Bathsheba: every sin is an offence against God.

The Letter to the Hebrews emphasises that Jesus is truly human: He shared our humanity and our weaknesses and afflictions. So he sympathises patiently with us in our sinfulness and is well able, as a high priest, to intercede with God for us, and to offer sacrifice on our

behalf. He prayed with such love and respect that God heard his prayer.

In the gospel of John some pagan Greeks ask their fellow Greek, Philip, to help them meet Jesus. The gospel message is now reaching out to Gentiles and this is taken by Jesus as the signal that his work is nearing its inevitable climax. Jesus' life has shown the way to salvation, but the human Jesus is very troubled by anticipation of his coming suffering, also described by the other Gospels in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Psalm Response: **A pure heart create for me, O God**

(Jer 31: 31-34; Psalm 50(51); Hebrews 5: 7-9; John 12: 20-33)

*Chris Oliver*



## Why Alpha

Pope Francis has asked that every parish and every Catholic have a missionary heart. In 2019, over 5,600 Catholic parishes and organisations around the world ran Alpha with an estimated 310,000 participants.

“Alpha aims to help people to either discover or rediscover the meaning and joy of the Christian message. It gives one an opportunity to leverage on the experiences of others in a friendly warm and simple atmosphere. Alpha is an invaluable tool for evangelisation.”

*Archbishop Alfred Martins Archbishop of Lagos, Nigeria*

# Arrangements for Holy Week

While restrictions remain, there is a limit to the number of people that the church can accommodate. Please be aware of this. If the church becomes full, the law requires that we refuse admission. Overall, there are two objectives; reverence and safety.

## PALM SUNDAY (9.00 am, 11.00 am and 12.00 noon)

There can be no procession — palms will be blessed at the beginning of Mass, and distributed at the end as you leave the church. The Passion Gospel will be read in its shortest form.

## HOLY THURSDAY MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (7.00 pm)

There can be no feet-washing, nor procession to the Altar of Repose. Mass will end in the normal way, and the Blessed Sacrament will be reposed in the Tabernacle. The church will remain open for private prayer for one hour after the end of Mass.

**The Church is open half-an-hour before the start of each Mass; please be in good time and allow time to find parking spaces. If the church reaches the limit of numbers with social distancing, it will (by law) be necessary to refuse admission.**

## GOOD FRIDAY (3.00 pm)

**Admission to the Liturgy at 3.00 will be by ticket only.**

The Passion Gospel is proclaimed in the shortest form, and there is no individual veneration of the Cross.

## HOLY SATURDAY EASTER VIGIL (9.00 pm)

There is no lighting of the new fire in the garden; the Easter Candle is blessed in the Sanctuary; there will be a reduced number of readings, and there will be no individual candles, Baptisms, nor sprinkling, but newly-blessed Holy Water will be available in small bottles at the end of Mass.

## EASTER DAY (9.00 am, 11.00 am AND 12.00 noon)

All Masses will include the renewal of Baptismal Promises, but there will not be sprinkling of Holy Water.

# Climate Change

## • WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

The Committee on Climate Change - the government's independent advisors on climate change - has a list of recommendations that the government needs to put in place to cut our emissions. This includes: planting more trees; switching to fully renewable sources of power; investing in better, cleaner public transport and electric vehicles; making it easier to cycle and walk around our communities; insulating our homes so we waste less energy; and ensuring decision makers prioritise heating that doesn't rely on fossil fuels.

## • WHAT COMES NEXT?

The UK will host a crucial global climate summit in Glasgow. This is an opportunity to lead the world into a cleaner, greener future, but we need to be investing in the solutions to the climate crisis at home if other countries are to see us as credible. Your messages help us keep up the pressure and make sure our politicians put in place the policies needed to get us well on the way to ending our contribution to climate change before the end of the year.

**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>

**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.



## SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

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

