



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 Witness of Missionary Saints

Last Wednesday Pope Francis continued his talks on the ‘Passion for Evangelisation’, turning to the example of St Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary to India, China and Japan. Some regard him as one of the greatest missionaries, but Pope Francis says:

“But it is not possible to say who is the greatest, who is the least. There are so many hidden missionaries who, even today, do much more than Saint Francis Xavier.”

Such ‘hidden missionaries’ are vital for the Church today. In looking at St Francis Xavier, we are looking at someone who was willing to leave his own land, and quite literally, put out into the deep (*Luke 5:4*). He came from northern Spain, the son of an aristocratic but impoverished family. He became a student at the Sorbonne in Paris, but was more interested in sports, as well as the social life of the university. However, he had as room-mates, a young man from Savoy and an older Spaniard called Iñigo. Although Xavier and Iñigo’s families had been on different sides in a recent war in Spain, eventually, all three became friends, and with four others, they decided to form a community, and on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady in 1534 they made vows, and were to become the original members of the Society of Jesus, the ‘Jesuits’. Iñigo is known to us as Ignatius of Loyola.

Six years later, Francis Xavier was to depart from Europe for India, to the Portuguese colony of Goa, quite literally putting out into the deep and risking shipwreck. From Goa, he then proclaimed the Gospel along the coast of southern India, and then to Indonesia, China and Japan.

He was the first of a numerous band of passionate missionaries to depart, ardent missionaries of modern times, ready to endure immense hardships and dangers, to reach lands and meet peoples from completely unknown cultures and languages, driven only by the powerful desire to make Jesus Christ and his Gospel known.

He never returned to Europe, and died in China in 1552, just twelve years after his departure from Rome.

His intense activity was always joined with prayer, the union with God, mystical and contemplative. He never abandoned prayer because he knew that is where he drew his strength. Wherever he went, he took great care of the sick, the poor and children. He was not an “aristocratic” missionary. He always went with the most in need, the children who were most in need of instruction, of catechesis. The poor, the sick... He specifically went to the “frontiers” when it came to care. And there, he grew in greatness. And the love of Christ was the strength that drove him to the furthest frontiers, with constant toil and danger, overcoming setbacks, disappointments and discouragement; indeed,

giving him consolation and joy in following and serving Him to the end.

The call to the life of the overseas missionary still exists today, and many follow that path, with a fruitful life. Their enthusiasm, their zeal for Christ is making a big difference in far-away places. The life and work of a foreign missionary is very different today from that of St Francis Xavier’s 450 years ago, but the zeal for Christ is the same.

An example is the NET Ministries, originating in America, and working in Scotland and Ireland as well as in the United States. In Scotland they have led over 32,000 retreats and ministered to over 2 million young Catholics. Hannah Heath from our parish is just such a missionary, working with them.

It is Saint Francis Xavier, who did all these great things, in such poverty, with such courage, who can give us a little bit of this zeal, of this zeal to live for the Gospel, to proclaim the Gospel. So many young people, so many young people today have something...a restlessness...and they do not know what to do with that restlessness. Look to Francis Xavier, look at the horizons of the world, look at the people who are in such need, look at how many people are suffering, so many people who need Jesus. And have the courage to go. Today too, there are courageous young people. I am thinking of the many missionaries, for example, in Papua New Guinea, of my own young friends who are in the diocese of Vanimo, and many others who have gone – young people – to evangelize in the steps of Francis Xavier. May the Lord grant us the joy to evangelize, the joy to bear this message, which is so beautiful, which makes us, and everyone, happy.

While not all Christians are called to, or can, leave the land of their birth to proclaim the Gospel in other countries, the witness given by those who do should inspire us all and encourage us to be willing to make the much lesser sacrifice to be active evangelists in the place where we already are.

In one of his letters to St Ignatius, Francis wrote: “Many, many people hereabouts are not becoming Christians for one reason only: there is nobody to make them Christian. Again and again I have thought of going round the universities of Europe, especially Paris, and everywhere crying out like a madman, riveting the attention of those with more learning than charity.”

May the prayers of St Francis Xavier now rivet out attention that we may all become true missionary disciples.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 17th May 2023

Notices of Interest

Car Park Safety: Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.

Fire Safety – Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **MUST NOT** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass - all stock is marked, so an easy task!
There is now a small display of items for 1st Holy Communion and Confirmation. *Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.*

Bible Alive for June 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.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham:

10th June 2023:



A coach will leave from St. Gregory's at 8am on Saturday 10th June, leaving Walsingham at about 5.00pm. **Cost £25 per person** (payable in advance). I understand that this is considerably more than in previous years, but the cost of coach hire has also increased dramatically. Please see poster for full details. To book, please speak to Caryll in the Office, or add your details to the list in the Lobby area and see one of the Clergy to pay.

Church Heating: Weekday Mass is now back in the church; Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

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

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Church, from 10am-12pm.

The Diocesan Assembly: There will be preparation sessions for the delegates of our Pastoral area here at St Gregory's on May 24th and June 7th in church at 7pm.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

Choir notes: Practice Thursday (18th May, Ascension Day) after evening Mass: 7:45 – 9pm. Come and join us as we strive to make our liturgy more inspiring. *Alec*

Ian Irwin RIP: Some Parishioners may remember Mr Irwin from St. Gregory's Primary School in the 1970's. He sadly died on Easter Sunday after a long illness. Please remember him in your prayers. May he rest in peace.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 22nd May in the Sacristy at 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: The second group of young people are receiving Holy Communion for the first time today, and then next week there will be more. Enrolment for 2024 will be in the autumn; please watch this newsletter for information nearer the time.

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

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)**

CAFOD: Did you know that Church teaching says that we should not only support those in poverty but also tackle the root causes of poverty? Pope Benedict XVI said that "Love – caritas - is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous & generous engagement in the field of justice & peace." For decades CAFOD has spoken out against injustice. To find out more & get involved in tackling the root causes of poverty, please go to cafod.org.uk/latestcampaigns

Pentecost in the Park-28th May 2023, 2pm-5pm: Come & join us to celebrate Pentecost at the Bandstand at Abington Park, 28th May 2pm-5pm. Bring a picnic, your chairs, your friends & family.

PLEASE CHECK IF YOU HAVE ENVELOPES There are still a few planned giving envelope boxes. If you have transferred to a standing order, but there is a box for you, please let Fr Andrew know.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Caritas Northampton: The following items are needed for local families with young children:

Baby cots x 2
Double bed and mattresses x 2
Wardrobe, chest of drawers, table and chairs, vacuum cleaner
If anyone has anything to donate could they please call Caritas on 01604 434362 to arrange collection.

Eucharistic Minister's Training: The 2nd session of training for both new & experienced Eucharistic Ministers was last Wednesday; the last sessions are on Wednesdays 31st May. It will run both at 11am & 7.30pm. This will be followed by commissioning at the Masses on Sunday 11th June, the Feast of Corpus Christi. If possible, all Eucharistic Ministers should attend all 3 sessions, either morning or evening. The ministry of giving the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful is important, & is a ministry of service. It is not a reward for the exceptionally holy. We all acknowledge that we are not worthy to receive Christ in the Eucharist, & the receiving is the greater honour than the giving. Deacon Michael is compiling a list of those willing to take up this ministry.

Sacred Heart Primary School, Luton, Head Teacher: The Governors of Sacred Heart Primary School are seeking to appoint an outstanding Head who will continue to lead this popular faith school and inspire its children, staff and families 'to be their best' The successful candidate will be a practising Catholic and be highly passionate about Religious Education and the Catholic Life within our school, working closely with the Subject Leader and our Parish Priest. See full details in the Narthex.

Assembly Insight

"But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God. . . They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they make Christ known to others."
(Vatican II; Lumen Gentium §3)

Prayer 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 14th May 2023, 6th Sunday of Easter Year A

The “double ascension” links Jesus’ ministry “to the lost sheep of Israel” with the apostles’ witness “to the ends of the earth”. God’s Kingdom, whose coming was enacted by Jesus, includes both forgiveness and judgement. After praying in the upper room, the eleven remaining apostles filled the vacancy in the ‘twelve’ – the twelve judges of Israel. Then the new-born Church was ready for its mission to be inaugurated at Pentecost. When God’s Kingdom is finally established over the whole world. Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives, where the Jews expect all the nations to stream.

Expecting this end to disorder in the world to come soon, Peter continues his letter by encouraging Christians to avoid the sinful behaviour of others. Be glad, even if being a Christian brings suffering – as it will. Our suffering, like that of Jesus, shows the

coming of God’s Kingdom.

Jesus ends his long teaching at the last supper with this heartfelt prayer for those who believe in him. He has told his apostles they will be scattered. But He and his Father will take care of them, and Jesus prays that they may always be one, just as Jesus and the Father are one. Then He goes to the Mount of Olives to be arrested.

Psalm Response: **I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.**

Acts 1:12-14; Ps 26; 1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11.

Chris Oliver

The Healing Garden

The Healing Garden is a place of sanctuary for survivors of abuse and all those in need of healing. A place which we hope will provide a relaxing and peaceful setting to spend time, experience quietness and contemplation, to help improve well-being and reduce isolation. Although the Healing Garden was opened in May 2022, it remains an ongoing development – a garden is never complete – which mirrors our diocesan commitment to listening and responding compassionately to those with lived experience of abuse and its impact. There will be a special collection for this on June 4th.

Alpha continues on May 23rd 2023 — This Tuesday

The word ‘Gospel’ means ‘Good News’, and the love of God; all that God has done for us: this is the best news ever. This week’s film looks at some of the things that make it difficult for us to tell others about the love of God. Last Sunday we heard in the second reading: “Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience.” (*1 Peter 3:15*) There are many accounts of people’s experiences, both good and bad, of telling the Good News of Jesus to others. Next Sunday, the feast of Pentecost we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God who gives us the right words and the courage to say them.

First session:	March 14 th 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21 st 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28 th 2023	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18 th 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25 th 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2 nd 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9 th 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12 th /13 th 2023	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16 th 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23 rd 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6 th 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13 th 2023:	What about the Church?

World Communications Day

The 57th World Communications Day is celebrated on 21 May 2023.

Pope Francis, following tradition, has released his message for World Communications Day on 24 January, the Feast of St Francis de Sales – patron saint of Catholic writers and journalists.

The Holy Father stresses the need to listen before speaking truth with a pure heart to “see beyond appearances and overcome the vague din which, also in the field of information, does not help us discern in the complicated world in which we live.”

“The call to speak with the heart,” he says, “radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth.”

The Pope hails the example of the great Doctor of the Church, St Francis de Sales, and his commitment to patient, heartfelt dialogue with everyone – even those who opposed him. A gifted theologian, his phrase “Heart speaks to heart” inspired many, none more so than the recently canonised Saint John Henry Newman who, on being made a Cardinal in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII, chose as his cardinalatial motto, *Cor ad cor loquitur* or Heart speaks to heart.

Catholics in England and Wales will remember with affection that ‘Heart speaks unto heart’ was also the motto for Pope Benedict XVI’s historic visit to the UK in 2010.

Gregory Care

Support for refugees

We continue to work with local churches supporting refugees and thank you to those who have donated things through us in the past.

We are now looking for:-

Wool and knitting needles and children’s bikes, and helmets.

The wool and needles can be left in the Gregory Care box however if you have a bike you would like to donate please speak to one the team so we can arrange collection and delivery.

Thank you

Gregory Care ☎ 07434 669011