



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 feeds the Church and looks after it

Today is the fifth and final Sunday with readings from the sixth chapter of St John’s Gospel, the discourse on the Bread of Life.

The reference to St Paul’s letter to the Ephesians which is from the second reading reminds us of the truth that Jesus teaches us about the Bread of Life, although it is a co-incidence that we hear it today as we have been reading that letter sequentially for the last seven weeks.

The Gospel today is the story of the reaction of the crowd to what we have been hearing over the last few weeks, and specifically that “if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you” (*John 6:53*).

There are two clear reactions; there are those who cannot accept what Jesus says, and that of the apostles, who clearly do not understand, but still recognise that, even though they don’t understand, yet because Jesus is “the Holy One of God” (*John 6:69*), they will stay with him.

That they fail to understand is made clear throughout the Gospel narrative, but we must not be hard on them, at that time they could not have known what was to happen in what we call ‘Holy Week’, nor did they yet have the fullness of the Holy Spirit which was to come on them at Pentecost, and would guide them into all truth (*see John 16:13*). More significantly, even though we do have this knowledge, and have the gift of the Holy Spirit, we cannot fully understand it. However, we can say, with Peter: “Lord, who shall be go to? You have the message of eternal life.” (*John 6:68*) Peter continues: “We believe — **We know** that you are the Holy One of God”. (*verse 69*) [The bold is added for emphasis; he initially says ‘believe’, then corrects himself by saying that he knows it.]

How does he ‘know’ it? This is at the heart of what we say Sunday by Sunday in the Creed. We do not say that we believe God and believe Jesus. We say that we believe **in** God; that we believe **in** Jesus; that we believe **in** the Holy Spirit, and finally that we believe **in** the Church.

Peter could have said that he believed the words of Jesus, but he was expressing a much deeper truth. He was saying that not only did he believe those words, but that he believed every word Jesus said precisely because he recognised that Jesus was the Christ. So we too can say that we know that Jesus is the Holy One of God, and that “of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved” as Peter was later to affirm. (*Acts 4:12*) To whom shall we go? There is no point in going elsewhere; Jesus, even though we may not understand him is the Truth and the Way, the way that leads to eternal Life (*see John 14:6*)

When Jesus started his ministry, he gathered a group of people around him. In all the Gospels the ‘Twelve’ are around him, and after Pentecost, it is they who form the infant Church. Symbolically they represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Church becomes the ‘New Israel’. “From the very beginning, the Lord Jesus “called to Himself those whom He wished; and He caused twelve of them to be with Him, and to be sent out preaching (*Mark 3:13; cf. Matt. 10:1-42*). Thus the Apostles were the first budding-forth of the New Israel”. (*Vatican II, Ad Gentes, 7th December 1965*)

Jesus was not proclaiming a new philosophy or theology, he was fulfilling the ancient Jewish promise of the Messiah. He was gathering the twelve tribes, as Joshua had done before (*Joshua 24:1*); the tribes that had separated after the death of Solomon. The twelve with Jesus were the beginning of the new covenant people, and Jesus promised that he would be with them for all time. (*Matthew 28:20*)

St Paul speaks of this relationship of Jesus with the people of the tribes of the New Israel as one of in a marriage covenant. This was not a new concept; in the prophets of the Old Testament we find this imagery used frequently, mainly where Israel is described as an unfaithful wife. (*For example, Hosea 1:2; Ezekiel 16:15*)

We see here one of the many paradoxes of our faith, for the Church and Christ become one body through the marriage covenant, and yet Christ is the husband who feed the Church, he is the head and we the members of the body, and he feeds us with what we are, his body. We, the body of Christ, through receiving the body of Christ, become the body of Christ.

Yet again we turn to the words of St Augustine: “Si comprehendis, non est Deus”: if you can understand it, it isn’t God! The wonderful thing is that we don’t have to understand it. All we need to recognise is that at the Altar we are not receiving ordinary bread; we are receiving the gift of the life of Jesus, so that we may be more perfectly conformed to what he wants us to be.

At the heart of our faith lies our relationship with Jesus. St Richard used the terms ‘friend and brother’; Charles Wesley spoke of Jesus as ‘lover of my soul’, it is the foundation of the mysticism of St Teresa of Avila, but above all, it is the heart of the Gospel message.

Jesus’ invitation to ‘follow me’ leads to his invitation to dine with him and to learn from him; to become one with him and to be him in the sense that St Teresa spoke of when she observed that he has no hands but ours to do his work on earth. Our communion with him is the consummation of this marriage relationship of which we read St Paul speaking of today. He feeds us and looks after us.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for September 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: There is a display of cards in the Foyer. If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Foyer after Sunday Mass, or the Office on Mon, Wed or Friday morning & speak to the Secretary who will show you what to do & where to go.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Anna Onica, Nicole Josephine Megna and
Grace Elizabeth Letts
who received Christian Baptism last weekend. Please
pray for them and their families.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Monday 6th September, 7pm. Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: We are already planning our preparation for First Holy Communions next year! So if you have a child who will be in year group 3, 4, 5 or 6 this September and who would like to be involved in next year's programme watch this space! There will be more details in September.

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

SPUC: Help protect the lives of Unborn Children by joining this year's March for Life. The march is on Saturday 4th September & will take place in Central London. It is a great Pro Life event & it is encouraging to be with so many Pro Life supporters. For further details either go onto the March for Life website marchforlife.co.uk or contact William on 07393965643 or wpcurrie@btinternet.com. It is not enough just to say that we are Pro Life: we must take action to stop abortion & the terrible damage it is doing to vulnerable girls, women & their unborn children.

Mission Northampton: Mission Northampton is based at the St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral, but is a town-wide project involving all the parishes & Catholic schools in the town. It is 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, & our own parish, that we may become all that God wishes us to be, & that we may be devoted to the teaching of the apostles, fellowship, Breaking of Bread & prayers. If you are interested in being part of this new initiative he would like to hear from you. Please contact Fr David for further information: frdaviddonaghue@northamptondiocese.org

News from the Foodstore! We as a parish continue to support the Cathedral Foodstore by supplying toiletries to add to food bags. The Cathedral supply these provisions each week to families in need from around Northampton. Please help us continue our commitment to provide household & personal hygiene products. We aim to add 2 items to each bag & there are approximately 80 bags sent out each week. At the moment we have very little in reserve. (Except baby products.) Please donate what you can, & continue to pray for this work. Many Thanks, Gregory Care.

Choir Matters: Thanks to Deacon Michael, I expect to have Power Point slides on show. These will include words of those hymns we will be using so let's hear you praise the Lord in song! You still need to be masked & we are encouraged to sing but sing with restraint to lessen the risk of transmission of the virus. Because of time constraints, the entry hymn at 11:00 Mass will not include every verse nor will we have a hymn at the end. Our next monthly choir practice will be 2 Sep - Feast of St Gregory, Friday 3rd. Alec

40 Hours exposition and adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament: This will be from 7.00 am on Friday September 10th to 11.00 pm on Saturday September 11th.

Parish Finances: Continued thanks for the wonderful generosity that you are showing to the parish, in the special collections, CAFOD, Missio, and gifts for the kitchen refurbishment.

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)**

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

Tots @ St Gregory's: We are planning to restart on Tuesday September 7th, 9.30 - 11.30. Refreshments provided. £1 per family. All welcome!

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

NYMO: On Saturday 9th Oct, NYMO will be holding their annual Youth Ministry Conference in Luton. The conference theme will focus on re-engaging our young people in the Church post lockdown, & is open to anyone with an interest in the future of the young people in our Church. The conference starts at 11am, (arrivals from 10.30am), & will finish at 3.30pm. Tickets for the conference cost £10, & can be booked online <https://nymo.org/product/youth-ministry-conference/>
More info at <https://nymo.org/conference/>

The Catholicism Course: The "Catholicism" course continues on Tuesday evenings through the summer, starting at 7.30. There are four sessions left:

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| 1 | August 24 th | The Eucharist |
| 2 | August 31 st | The Communion of Saints |
| 3 | September 7 th | Prayer and the Life of the Spirit |
| 4 | September 14 th | The Last Things |

please email to Fr Andrew for the Zoom link

In the autumn there will be a new round of courses available; in particular, those who proclaim the Scriptures at Mass will be asked to take part.

St Gregory's next Alpha: Below are the dates of the next Alpha course which we are hoping will be able to be in the hall and in person. It is highly recommended for everyone, and is very enjoyable.

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| First session: | 21st September 2021: Is there more to life than this? |
| Second Session: | 28th September 2021 Who is Jesus? |
| Third Session: | 5th October 2021 Why did Jesus die? |
| Fourth Session | 12th October 2021 How can I be sure of my faith? |
| Fifth Session | 19th October 2021 Why and how do I pray? |
| Sixth Session | 9th November 2021 How does God guide us? |
| Seventh Session | 16th November 2021 Why and how should I read the Bible? |
| Away-Day | 19th -20th November 2021 Who is the Holy Spirit? |
| Eighth Session | 23rd November 2021 How can I resist evil? |
| Ninth Session | 30th November 2021 Why and how should we tell others? |
| Tenth Session | 7th December 2021 What about the Church? |
| Eleventh Session | 14th December 2021 What about the rest of my life? |

Each session starts with a good meal (A proper evening meal, not just a snack), then we watch a film together about our faith. After the film we have a conversation around our table about what we have seen and heard. It is good to have established believers as well as potential converts and those who simply want to know more about our faith. There is no charge, but donations are cheerfully accepted.

Scripture Readings 26th August 2018, 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

The Book of Joshua summarises Israel's history from the death of Moses until they settle in the Promised Land. Before he dies Joshua invites the tribes of Israel to promise to obey the Lord and to put aside all other gods. In solemn assembly the people rehearse all the Lord did for them when Moses led them through the desert. Three times they solemnly renew the covenant by the stone at Shechem, in Samaria.

Last week the psalm urged us to fear the Lord; now it assures us that the Lord rescues the just man from all misfortune.

Our last reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians: we must imitate Christ, whatever our role in society. We should "be subject to one another". "Wives, be subject to your husbands" and "children, obey your parents"; balanced by "fathers, do not provoke

your children" and "husbands, love your wives".

In chapter six of John's Gospel we hear more reactions to Jesus' teaching on the Eucharist. Like Nicodemus not understanding how he could be "born from above", many disciples could not accept this teaching. Why is eating his flesh more difficult to accept than his Ascension? These things are "real" – part of the heavenly realm, which we are invited to share, but life given only by the Spirit.

Psalm Response: **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

(Joshua 24: 1-2, 15-18; Psalm 33(34); Eph 5: 21-32; John 6: 60-69)

Chris Oliver

The Feasts of St Gregory and the Consecration of the church

There is just 12 days from this Sunday until the Feast of St Gregory, and the numbers of those infected with COVID remains high. We had hoped that by the beginning of September we would be in a better state, but, alas, we cannot be planning a celebration on the scale that we have been used to before the pandemic.

However, all is not lost, and the Mass at 7.00 on Friday evening, 3rd September will happen, and there will be refreshments afterwards. Because it is impossible to know how many people will come to the

Mass, and how many of them will stay for the refreshments, rather than our normal appeal for food, we are planning to serve tea, coffee and squash, with cakes and biscuits. We are appealing for contributions of cakes, **BUT** only those that will keep if not consumed on the night. Please bring cakes when you come to Mass.

Cakes not eaten on Friday will be served on Sunday after the 9.00 am Mass when we celebrate the anniversary of the consecration of the church.

Two messages from CAFOD

1 On Saturday 14 August, a devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti. More than 1900 people have been killed and at least one million more people are affected. Tropical storm Grace has now hit Haiti, exacerbating the already serious emergency. CAFOD is working through the local Church organisations, Caritas Haiti, the Jesuit Migrants and Refugees Service, the religious congregations and sister agency Catholic Relief Services to provide urgent humanitarian aid - food, water, tents, hygiene kits and first aid for families affected.

In Afghanistan, we are shocked and gravely concerned by the Taliban take-over of the country. The generosity and compassion of our Catholic community have allowed us to stand together with communities in Afghanistan since the 1980s, supporting local organisations committed to improving the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people. As you will appreciate, the situation in Afghanistan is uncertain and changing rapidly. Our Emergency Response Team are assessing how best to respond. We are doing everything possible to ensure the immediate well-being of local partners and the communities they serve. Please keep the people of Afghanistan in your prayers.

We are also responding to serious food shortages in Africa – in Ethiopia's Tigray region, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. Families across these three countries face extreme hunger because of a deadly combination of Covid, climate change and protracted conflict. A recent UN report identifies hunger in Tigray in Ethiopia, South Sudan, and north-east Nigeria as "catastrophic". We have committed £500,000 already to get food and clean water to hundreds of thousands of people. With further support local aid workers will be able to scale up their response to reach more women, children, men, the elderly and people with disabilities with the food they urgently need.

Thank you for your solidarity, your prayers and your support for CAFOD's work across the world. We share this prayer with you in this time of crisis.

Loving Lord,

For those who have died, give them eternal rest. For those who are bereaved, comfort and console them. For those who are hurt, heal and strengthen them.

Lord God, enable us to help our suffering brothers and sisters in whatever way we can.

Heavenly Father, be with us now and always.

Amen.

2 Thank you for your gift of £112.78.

Your gift will support people like Lemukola from Uganda, whose wife became ill with Hepatitis E after drinking river water. Thanks to donations from CAFOD supporters like you, our partner organisation Caritas Moroto were able to repair a broken borehole in Lemukola's village. They also trained local mechanics how to fix the pump should it break down again, so no-one in Lemukola's village has to drink dirty water.

Lemukola says: 'When the borehole was mended, life changed. Now we can get water whenever we want and the spread of diseases has stopped. We can bathe, cook, water the animals and wash clothes whenever we want. It feels good to have safe water so near.'

Thank you again for sharing what you have with those in need.

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