



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

Sunday of the Word of God

One of the really important documents of the Second Vatican Council is entitled “*Dei Verbum*” — the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

This document, as a ‘Dogmatic Constitution’, has the highest status in terms of the teaching of the Church, and one which must be taken with the greatest possible importance.

The structure and content of the document is replicated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and comes in the first 150 paragraphs of the Catechism; demonstrating its importance in the teaching of the Church.

The structure of ‘*Dei Verbum*’ begins with the revelation of God, which is completed and perfected in Jesus.

It is important not to confuse this with the last book of the Bible, which is sometimes called ‘Revelation’

“Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth. Moreover He confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal.” (*Dei Verbum* §4)

The second chapter considers the transmission of divine revelation; it begins with the teaching of Jesus himself, and then the preaching of the Apostles, and takes us down to the responsibility of the Church in every generation to proclaim the revelation. Although this chapter does not specifically speak of the task of evangelisation in so many words, we are told that “the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church”. (*Dei Verbum* §10) The ‘teaching office’ is not an office in the sense of a room somewhere in the Vatican with desk and chairs; it is rather the official responsibility of the entire Church, including all the Baptised.

This is why today is a good day to be announcing the dates of our next Alpha course, and asking ‘all the Baptised’ in the parish - at least, all the adult Baptised of the parish - to be supporting this in any way they can.

It is only when we get to chapter three that ‘*Dei Verbum*’ gets to the subject of the Scriptures, which we recognise as the word of God, written by humans: “God speaks in Sacred Scripture through men in human fashion”. (*Dei Verbum* §12, quoting *St Augustine*) It is therefore important that we not only read the scriptures, but that we also seek to understand what they are truly saying. This is why Bible Study is so important, and again, it is good that this week we have the chance to engage with Christians of other traditions in studying the Word of God on Tuesday evening.

Chapter 4 gives a brief overview of the Old Testament. Before the second Vatican Council, very little of the Old Testament was read at Mass, and consequently most of it was little known to the ordinary Mass-going Catholic. One of the directives of the Council was that the “treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word” (*Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium* §51)

The Old Testament prepared the Israelite people for the coming of the Messiah, beginning in the Garden of Eden when God promises that a man will strike the head of the serpent (*see Genesis 3:15*); the first promise by God that there will be redemption. Later we find the prophecies of the Messiah, and many examples of allegories of Christ. “God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New.” (*Dei Verbum* §16)

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the New Testament, and especially of the Gospels. None of the Gospels should be understood as a ‘biography’ in the modern sense of that word, rather that:

The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who “themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word” we might know “the truth” concerning those matters about which we have been instructed. (*see Luke 1:2-4*). (*Dei Verbum* §19)

The final chapter deals with the Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church, and invites us all to “move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures” (*Dei Verbum* §23). For this purpose, the Church has always sought to provide translations of the Bible into the language of the people. This began with the translation from Greek into Latin by St Jerome in the fourth century, the Douai-Rheims Bible into English in 1582 (30 years before the King James Version), and recently with the Jerusalem Bible and many others. The council encouraged translations to be made in co-operation with other Christian bodies, and we will soon be moving to using the English Standard Version, which is already in use in India.

The document ends with a plea for a use of the Scriptures available for non-Christians, which would be useful for evangelisation, something which, in a different medium, exists in the Alpha video presentations.

The very next of the Vatican II documents is that on the Apostolate of the Laity, in which all the Baptised are asked to exercise their God-given talents for the spread of the Gospel.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for February 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 wherever possible! We also 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*. PS: There are still some Church Art Calendars and Diaries available.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: There will be a shared Bible Study based on the theme of the World Council of Churches: "Praying for Unity amidst Injustice". This year we are hosts, and the meeting is on Tuesday 24th January, with refreshments from 7pm and the meeting to start at 7.30pm.

Concert in aid of St. Gregory's Warm Space: The Sheppard Singers will be performing in the Church on Saturday 28th January at 7.30pm. Free entry & interval refreshments available. Highly recommended! Retiring collection in aid of St. Gregory's Warm Space. All welcome.

Deacon Rory & Anne Stewart's New Address:
c/o Widmouth Farm, Watermouth, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 9RX

A course on the Psalms: It is sub-titled "The School of Prayer", with the invitation to 'learn to pray like Christ'. The last session is this week on Wednesday 25th January.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: As a trial, Holy Hour will be Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. 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.

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.

Residential for all in Year 7-Year 13: NYMO are once again running our annual LUX weekend from 3rd-5th Feb. The weekend is packed full of fun activities, moving times of prayer and inspirational talks. Come and join around 100 other young people from all parts of the diocese for an unforgettable weekend! For more information and to book a place check out or website www.nymo.org/lux

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

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (01604 713015) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Change of Date: Now Saturday 25th 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 & 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**

Retrouvaille: A Programme for Couples Struggling in their Marriages: Help Your Marriage. Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. Tens of thousands of couples headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending & using the tools provided. There is no group therapy or group work. For confidential info or to register for the next programme commencing with a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 24 - 26 February 2023, or a Virtual weekend on 6 - 9 July 2023, call/text 07887296983 or 07973380443 or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

Blessed Cyprian Tansi: Last Friday was the 64th anniversary of the death of Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi, and we are praying for his canonisation after his beatification by Pope St John Paul II at Oba in Nigeria in March 1998. There is a regular prayer group with this intention. Cardinal Arinze particularly recommends his intercession; Tansi was one of his teachers. "Blessed Cyprian Michael Tansi is a prime example of the fruits of holiness which have grown and matured in the Church in Nigeria since the Gospel was first preached in this land. He received the gift of faith through the efforts of the missionaries, and, taking the Christian way of life as his own, he made it truly African and Nigerian." (*Words from the homily at the Beatification by Pope St John Paul II*)

CAFOD is looking for people to give some time and join in our parish mission of global outreach. Could you help develop our work in parishes or Catholic schools? Training and support is provided. See cafod.org.uk/Volunteer for more information or get in touch - Deborah Purfield 07786 114 390 | dpurfield@cafod.org.uk

Sing along to 60s/70s Music, by the Burton Latimer Ukulele and Drum Group, In aid of 'The Cathedral Foodstore'. 7pm Monday 23rd January — St Thomas Centre. Admission: £5. Tickets available after Mass.

The Sunday of the Word of God: This Sunday is the day that Pope Francis has asked us to celebrate the Word of God in Holy Scripture, and there will be a celebration in the Cathedral at 3pm, at which readers will be commissioned. All our readers are specially invited to be there; everyone is welcome.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 13th Feb 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: 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: 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)

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

Refreshment Donations: Until the beginning of Lent, refreshment donations are given to Gregory Care which supports those in material need in our own parish, but also operates the toiletry collections for the Cathedral Foodstore. The total of donations to the Hope Centre has been magnificent, and will provide significant help for the homeless of our town.

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 22nd January 2023, 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

The first reading from First Isaiah. About 725 BC, Ahaz, weak king of Judah, asked Assyria for help, in spite of Isaiah's advice to wait because "God is with us". God would send a saviour, idealistically described with words probably used to hail the new king Hezekiah. Assyria attacked northern Palestine, but Isaiah looked forward to the Messiah bringing freedom to the "Way of the sea" ie Galilee.

The psalm expresses total confidence in rescue by the Lord, hoping to dwell in safety in the Lord's house.

In our second reading Paul is shocked at the self-glorifying divisions, or "rents", in the church at Corinth. Whoever baptised us, we were baptised into Christ. With our common baptism we should therefore "be united in belief and practice". Unity, but not uniformity. Our task is to preach the Good News of Christ's

crucifixion, without following particular teachers or allowing the meaning of the Cross to be obscured by clever oratory.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has rejected the devil's temptations and so identified himself as the "Son of God", capable of not sinning. Hearing of the arrest of the Baptist, Jesus withdraws to Galilee, the "Way of the sea". He then quotes the verses of Isaiah from our first reading, before starting his mission in Galilee by calling his first disciples.

Psalm Response: **The Lord is my light and my help.**

(Isaiah 8:23-9:3; Psalm 26(27); 1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17; Matthew 4:12-23)

Chris Oliver

Shared Bible Study with other Christians

Before Covid and lockdown, this was a regular annual event, and it is a happy sign that it is to happen again this week, and that we are the hosts. It is on Tuesday evening, starting promptly at 7.30, but there will be refreshments from 7.00 pm. The theme is provided by the World Council of Churches, and looks at how we recognise God in other people, and our attitude to unjust discrimination of any sort. The question of 'conscious'

or 'unconscious' racism came in to the news on Thursday in relation to the boss of Crawley Town Football Club, John Yems. Our second reading this Sunday speaks of divisions in the Christian community; there are also divisions in the human community, and the message of the Gospel is of reconciliation. In that spirit of reconciliation, we are all invited to meet with other Christians and pray for justice for all people.

A Concert supporting our Warm Welcome

The 'Sheppard Singers' have offered to give us a concert of vocal music (free to come, but with a collection at the end) to support our 'Warm Welcome' initiative on Friday evening starting at 7.30 pm. Many of the members of this group have sung here before as 'Consensus Vocalis', a group which disbanded with the retirement of their director, Dr Allan

Leroy. The first part of the concert will be mainly sacred music, sung 'a capella', while after the interval, there will be secular pieces. The church will be heated for the concert; please come and bring friends. No tickets are required, simply turn up!

GREGORY CARE

Thank you all for your generous support over the past few months. Your support has been amazing and has enabled us to provide gifts to several families over Christmas as well as providing clothes, toys and household items to families in need. We have recently committed to working with local churches to support Ukrainian families staying at the Westone Hotel. As we have no storage facilities we cannot accept general donations but please lookout for specific items we may be asking for.

Gregory Care is a very small dedicated team of volunteers who would welcome more volunteers with new skills, ideas and time. If you would like to hear more about us please speak to Carole or Catherine.

TOILETRIES

Two years on and your support providing toiletries for the Cathedral Foodstore continues to grow in line with demand. Your generosity is not only appreciated by the recipients but has also been noted by Foodstore volunteers, local councillors and other supporters of the Foodstore. St Gregory's was ahead of the game in recognising the negative impact of hygiene poverty. Your weekly contributions are helping to improve the mental and physical health of local people in need. As a parish we should be proud of what we are continuing to achieve. We hope some of you may have seen the write up in the Chronicle and Echo - 'The reality of a typical Thursday morning Foodbank session' (9th January)

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/people/the-reality-of-a-typical-thursday-morning-foodbank-session-in-northampton-in-january-a-volunteers-view-3979701>

Alpha beginning on March 14th 2023

The dates of the next Alpha Course are in the next column, and we are hoping that by ending in mid-June before the holiday season starts, many people will be able to attend. Everyone will be given a 'plus one' invitation; that is, please come and bring a friend. All offers of help are welcome; if you can help, please speak to one of the Alpha Team, who can be identified by their badge on a lanyard.

Help is needed in preparing the hall in the afternoon, in the catering team and in the washing-up team, but most of all, help is needed in advertising the course and in bringing friends, and in coming yourself!

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

