



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

Joy to God's City

Last week we were offered a vision of a great river spilling out from St Gregory's and reaching the entire parish. This is not a river of water but a river of faith — a river of people filled with faith. Psalm 45 (46) speaks of this river:

The waters of a river give joy to God's city
the holy place where the Most High dwells
God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.

The Lord of Hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come, consider the works of the Lord
the redoubtable deeds he has done on earth.

Psalm 46:2-3

The vision is based on that of Ezekiel, and one which is referenced in the Book of the Apocalypse (Revelation). It is a vision for the evangelisation of the parish; a vision that the people of faith will flood out from the Church and proclaim the Good News to all the people of our parish.

A vision is a fine thing, but to make it a reality, there are steps that need to be taken. The first is that the vision must be shared. It cannot just be one person's vision; it must be the vision of the people of the parish.

We need the vision because it is the command of the Lord. He commissioned the Church (that is, all of us) to go out and proclaim the Good News. (*Mark 16:15*) Down the Christian centuries that has been faithfully continued, from the mission sent by our patron, St Gregory, including the mission of Ignatius Spencer (*elsewhere in this newsletter*) and now our responsibility.

We need that vision because we love the Church. The Church has been responsible in past generations for pioneering schools, hospitals, social services; more recently hospices and foodbanks. While many good things have been done by Christian people, we are not in a perfect world and there is more to do!

We need that vision because we are called to love all people. We have found the peace and joy, the love and support from our relationship with Jesus, and we want others to share in that. We want all people to share in the joy of the Gospel. That is why we must be part of that river.

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.

Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12 (ESV translation)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Apocalypse 22:1-2

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Sienna Schiopo
Jazmyn Georgina Mac and
Jaxon James Mac
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. A small display of cards and items for Confirmation is available. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

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

40 Hours Adoration Planning: The final planning meeting for our parish 40 hours adoration will be after the 7.00 pm Mass on Thursday 11th July. **Any who have missed the previous meetings are very welcome.** Blessed (soon to be Saint) Carlo Acutis- pray for us

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)**

Choir Notes: I have had to change several of the dates of our Saturday practices, 11-12:30. The new details are July 13; August 24; Oct 12; Nov 9, 16, 23, 30; Dec 7 and 14, then some time in February 2025 (Happy Christmas!). *Alec*

CAFOD Big Pilgrimage

1.30 pm on Saturday 6th July at the Cathedral. Just come any time between 1.30 and 5.00 pm, and you will find: Hospitality, refreshments and a warm welcome, space for prayer and reflection and interactive activities for people of all ages reflecting CAFOD's values of justice, hope and peace. You will also be able to find out how you can share the passion for justice and help support some of the world's most vulnerable people including those affected by the food crisis in Sudan. As a parish, we are supporters of CAFOD through Lent and Harvest fast days and many people make regular donations as well. A town-wide CAFOD support group could help to make the Catholic Social Teaching better known and understood to more people, both inside and outside the Catholic community

Pilgrimage to Northern France You are invited to join Bishop David & Canon John Udris on pilgrimage to Northern France from 15-22 Oct. The pilgrimage will begin with 3 nights in Lisieux, the home of St Thérèse, before we travel to Chartres to the beautiful Cathedral for 1 night. Leaving Chartres we travel to Paris via Rouen. We travel home following 3 nights in the French capital. For more details visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/france/>

Missio Matters: On behalf of Fr Daniel Rooke, the new Diocesan Director for Missio, we would like to encourage Red Box holders & fellow parishioners to come to the Mass at St Aidan's Church, NN2 6QJ on Sat 29th June at midday. Fr Daniel will be joined by Fr Anthony Chantry, Missio National Director for England & Wales. After Mass there will be opportunity to hear more about the work of Missio & meet other Missio volunteers. Bring packed lunch or something to share. Tea/coffee will be provided. For more info email redbox@missio.org.uk. **Missio Supporters:** Copies of latest magazines available to collect in the red box at church entrance. I have arranged envelopes in alphabetical order. There are spares for anyone interested. *Alec*

Called & Equipped 2024: What is God calling you to do next? Our year-long formation course covers the foundations of Catholic teaching alongside developing a personal spirituality, which might just be right for you. Find out more here: <https://northamptondiocese.org/called-equipped/> & sign up for our 2nd introductory webinar on Thurs 27th June, 7.30 - 8:30pm.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next - 29th June**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 1st July 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 2024/5: enrolment will be in the autumn. Keep watching the newsletter to find the date.

Confirmation in 2024: The Confirmation will be on Friday evening, 28th June at 7.00 pm. Email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk for further information.

Next Alpha Sessions:

Tenth Session: **June 25th:** Why and how should I tell others?
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!!

Karuri School Project: Many parishioners will remember Wangari Cecilia who returned to her home in Kenya in 2010 to establish a school for destitute children. 14 years on, the project continues with many successes. Challenges always remain & the most recent one is the destruction of their food crops in the recent devastating floods. On 29th June, 4 walkers aim to walk the entire 88 km Northampton Round in ONE DAY! Starting at 2am they will walk for about 20 hours, taking more than 120000 steps. A huge thank you to those who have already donated; we are trying to raise £3000 so if anyone can support the walkers, please go to karurischoolproject.org & follow the link at the top of the website homepage.

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: 10.00 am-12.00 pm.

Picnic in the Park: If the rain holds off, Gregory Care is planning a picnic in Abington Park this Sunday, 23rd June from 12.30 pm. There is no cost; just bring your own picnic and join us for a get-together and children's games.

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.

Knights of St Columba: As a practising Catholic man, you may have an interest in helping those in need, serving your parish, developing your faith & giving something back to your community. By joining the Knights, you can do all that & more. You will work with like-minded men across your Diocese who can offer their experience & support. Working together towards a common goal, creates a strong bond of fraternity with new friends who become 'Brothers'. See poster for full details.

Abington Avenue URC Friday Lunch - enjoy a hot lunch and pudding for £6 every Friday! Refreshments from 10.30am, lunch **12pm (pre-booking required)**. For more info please email office.aaurc@gmail.com or visit www.aaurc.co.uk

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

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 23rd June: 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Satan said that if Job lost all that he valued he would curse God. So Satan was permitted to test Job in this way. After losing everything Job laments his losses, asking why God has treated him – a just man – so badly. Eventually God answers at great length – a beautiful hymn of praise to God’s power over and in all creation, confirming that God is indeed “greater than any mortal”.

The psalm praises God for helping and rescuing storm-tossed seafarers.

The writer of the 2nd Letter to the Corinthians has said he would prefer to be with the Lord, who has rescued him from near despair, but nevertheless he accepts that he is required to do further work on earth. But in doing this he – and the Corinthians – must constantly have in mind the new creation they have become, now they know the risen Christ. So he does not lose heart, even though people might

have thought God is no longer caring for him.

Job and the psalm provide a fitting background for Mark’s description of Jesus stilling the storm. But in Mark’s gospel the disciples do not understand: they cannot make the connection to the lesson learned so painfully by Job. They do not yet have faith that he will care for them – even when asleep! Understanding can come only after Jesus’ death on the cross.

Psalm Response:

**O give thanks to the Lord,
for his love endures for ever.**

(Job 38: 1, 8-11; Ps106(107): 23-26, 28-31; 2 Cor 5: 14-17; Mark 4: 35-41)

Chris Oliver

Ignatius Spencer ‘Apostle of Prayer for England’

Part of the ‘Thomas Becket Festival at the Cathedral next week-end is a lecture on the life of a man who deserves to be better known in Northampton, and may eventually become recognised as a saint.

George Spencer was born on December 21st 1799, the youngest son of the then Earl Spencer, who was at the time First Lord of the Admiralty, and living in London. He grew up at the family home of Althorp. One of his brothers was an ancestor of Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales. George was sent to Eton College in 1808, and it was there that he was attracted to the evangelical movement in the Church of England which was just beginning to become influential

As a younger son of the aristocracy, George was expected to become an Anglican clergyman. He studied the classical languages, as well as employing a Jewish scholar to teach him some Hebrew. On 22 December 1822 George was ordained deacon. For two years George worked in a Sunday school, but also as a magistrate in Northampton and on June 13 1824 George was ordained as an Anglican priest. He was then given the charge of the parish of Brington by his father, who had the right to appoint the vicar. George was totally committed to the care of his parish and spent his days visiting his parishioners, the sick and the dying and was often seen dispensing food, clothes and money. Although from one of the wealthiest families in England, he chose to live an austere life without any luxuries, and remain close to the poorest of his parish. Such money as he had, he devoted to the service of the poor. One parishioner wrote. “His great charity to the poor and wandering beggars was unbounded, at times he gave them all the money he had, and stripped himself of his clothes to give them to the distressed.”

During his time at Brington, George began to ask questions about his Anglican faith and doubts clouded his mind. He explored every tradition, from High Church to Evangelical and also spoke to Methodists and other non-conformists.

*Loving Father, your servant,
Ignatius Spencer,
Spent his entire life preaching the love
shown for us
in the Passion of Your Son,
and working tirelessly
to bring the people of this country
to know that love.*

*Help us to follow his example,
and show us that you are well pleased
with his life,
by granting the favour we now ask
through his intercession.*

*In particular, at this time we pray
for your blessing on the mission of the
Church in Northampton.
Mary, Mother of Holy Hope,
Pray for us.
Amen.*

The Evangelical formation that George had received was centered on the Scriptures and he struggled to find evidence there for some of the doctrines of the Church of England. While on holiday on the Isle of Wight George began to read the writings of some of the early church Fathers, among them St John Chrysostom and St Gregory the Great. He began to understand that Christian faith and teaching continued to develop beyond the writing of the New Testament under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Returning to his parish, he got to know some of the nearby Catholic priests, amongst those who influenced him was Fr Foley, the priest who cared for the mission to Northampton, and who began the building of what is now our Cathedral. George was received into the Catholic Church on January 30th 1830.

He was ordained to the Priesthood in 1832 and was sent to work in West Bromwich, but such was the power of his preaching that he was

invited to missions in many places. In 1839 he was appointed as Spiritual Director at Oscott Seminary. He had tried to inaugurate a national Mission in 1837 for the ‘conversion of England’, but sadly this was opposed, perhaps lest it provoke renewed persecution of Catholics in England. However Pope Gregory XVI gave his blessing to the work of Ignatius (he had previously been Abbot of the same monastery as Pope St Gregory the Great, who had sent Augustine to England thirteen centuries before). He joined the Passionist Order in 1841, taking the name of Ignatius of St Paul and spent his life working for the conversion of England to the Catholic faith. He is described as the ‘Apostle of Prayer for England’.

Today Pope Francis is calling us all to be ‘missionary disciples’ and be engaged in the conversion of our communities.

Part of the process of beatification is the recognition of a miracle. May the fruition of our mission be such a miracle! We may ask him to pray that his mission may be blessed in our lifetime.

Everyone is invited to come to the lecture on Ignatius Spencer given by Fr Gerard Skinner, who wrote his biography:— in the St Thomas Centre at the Cathedral, 3.00 pm on Sunday 7th July.

Picnic in the Park

☛ We will be meeting near the aviary in Abington Park (the small park) close to toilets, the cafe and bandstand.

☛ Please join us if you are able, it will be a good opportunity to further develop our church community.