



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

This is Holy Week

Palm (Passion) Sunday

The liturgy of the day has two sides — shown by the two Gospels that are read. The first is at the blessing of the palm branches, which takes place outside the church; for us, in the hall where we gather before Mass starts. This represents for us the Mount of Olives, from there we will walk in procession waving our palms to enter the church, singing ‘Hosanna’. Throughout the week, the church is our Jerusalem, and on Thursday evening we will re-trace our steps as we go back to the Mount of Olives, to Gethsemane, to pray with our Lord.

The second side of the liturgy of the day is made real to us in the reading of the Passion (this year, from St Mark). Whereas we sang ‘Hosanna’ in the procession into church, as did the crowd in Jerusalem, now we find ourselves shouting ‘Crucify him’. The verse from the hymn is made real for us:

Sometimes we strew his way, and his sweet praises sing
Resounding all the day: ‘Hosannas to our King’.
Then ‘Crucify’ is all our breath, and for his death we thirst and cry.

This is, of course, the reality of our life. We spend time praising God and engaging in prayer and good works, but we also fall into sin. Every sinful act, word, thought or neglect is a shout of ‘Crucify’. That is why the opportunity of Monday or Tuesday evening is so important.

Monday and Tuesday

These first days of Holy Week are marked by Jesus’ teaching in the temple, although our Gospel readings at Mass invite us to meditate on the bigger picture of the suffering of Our Lord. But these are days when we have the opportunity to do as God says through Isaiah:

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.
Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

The two penitential liturgies offer us a choice of day for seeking reconciliation before entering into the ‘Triduum’; the three holy days which will bring us to Easter.

Wednesday

This day is sometimes called ‘Spy Wednesday’, and the Gospel of the day tells of Judas making his deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus. It is also a practical day for the church. On Monday and Tuesday we have had the opportunity to spiritually wash and make ourselves clean; today we do the

same for the church; a ‘Big Clean’. At Easter everything is renewed. Fresh Holy Water, the font is blessed, the Holy Oils are renewed. All helpers are most welcome!

In the evening there is the production of ‘Born for This’ which is a musical meditation on the Stations of the Cross written by Jo Boyce, the ‘J’ of CJM music, much of which we sing as part of our regular Sunday Mass music. It is being performed by students at Weston Favell Academy, and as well as the benefit we will gain by hearing it, we can give encouragement to the students by our attendance.

Maundy (Holy) Thursday

This day also has two sides to it. As the day on which Our Lord instituted the Eucharist, it is a day when all priests renew their priestly commitment, and this happens at the Mass of Chrism in the Cathedral at 11.00 am when the Holy Oils for the coming year are also blessed. All are welcome to come to this special Mass.

In the evening we celebrate the Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 7.00 pm, at which we are reminded of the ‘Mandatum’, the New Commandment to love one another, dramatically illustrated in the washing of feet. There is a collection at Mass for Gregory Care. At the end of the Mass we follow Our Lord to the garden of Gethsemane, where we are invited to spend time with him in his agony. This ends at midnight when Jesus is arrested.

Good Friday

The main liturgy of the day is at 3 in the afternoon; the time that Jesus “breathed his last” and “gave up the spirit”. The ‘Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion’ is a meditation at the foot of the Cross. There is a special collection for the upkeep of the holy places in Jerusalem.

Holy Saturday

This is a day of rest — the body of Jesus rests in the tomb. It is also our Preparation Day. We observe the Jewish calendar in that the day ends at sunset, and in the darkness of the night we begin our Easter celebration.

Easter Day

The Easter Vigil is the most important liturgy of the Christian year. It is long; beginning at 9.00 pm, it will last perhaps 2 hours. It involves readings which trace the story of our salvation from the time of the first sin in the Garden of Eden through the covenants with Abraham and Moses, through the words of the prophets, through the preaching of St Paul and explaining the Gospel, the Good News of the Resurrection. Today we sing ‘Hosanna’; next Sunday’s word is ‘Alleluia!’

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Mary Chantell Ward
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for her and her family.

Penitential Liturgies: there will be a Penitential Liturgy at the Cathedral tomorrow evening, and at St Gregory's on Tuesday evening; both starting at 7pm. This makes a good preparation for the experience of the Triduum (the Three Holy Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday) leading to the great celebration of the Resurrection.

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. A new supply of Easter cards has finally arrived and is on display in the foyer. Cards and items for First Communion and Confirmation will be available after Easter. Red Communion ties are here and will cost £6. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

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

Easter Flowers will be arranged from 10am on Saturday morning (30th March). Anyone who wishes to help with the arrangements please pop along – all welcome!

Coming Events (for your diary):

Saturday 13th April. Table top sale for Gregory Care

Tuesday 16th April: Next Alpha course starts

Saturday 27th April: Pro-Life Life Chain on St Peters Way, 11.00 – 1.00

Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*

Friday 19th to Saturday 20th July: 40 Hours Adoration at St Gregory's

Diocesan Pilgrimages: There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8th June (leaving 8am sharp), and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23rd Aug to Friday 30th Aug. Booking details for both will follow shortly.

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)**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 8th April 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 2023/4: All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

Confirmation in 2024: There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk for further information.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – Wed. 27th Mar in time for Easter!**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

Choir Notes: Preparation for Holy Week is finished. The next will be 4 May. *Alec*

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: 10am-12 pm.

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.

Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Hour: This will take place at Our Lady's Shrine, Great Billing on Sunday 7th April at 3pm.

The Annunciation of the Lord: 24 Hour Adoration Monday-Tuesday 8th-9th April: There will be Mass at on Monday 8th April at 10.30am at Our Lady's Shrine, Great Billing. This will be followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which will continue until the 9.30am Mass at Great Billing on Tuesday 9th April. Sign-up sheets for the Exposition are available at the back of both churches.

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!!

Diocesan Vacancy for Youth Ministry Admin: general office support & admin to Youth Ministry Office. Role is for 22hrs pw. Working pattern to be agreed with candidate. Office location flexible: negotiated between Luton, Northampton, or hybrid. For full info & application visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs> Candidates should complete a Diocesan application form & email to: hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org Closing date 5th April. Interviews 17th and 18th April.

Care for our environment: Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1st to October 4th, and this has now become a celebration shared by other Christians as well. Within our own local area, it would be good if Christians could work together to try to bring about a greater understanding and respect for God's creation. Issues like clean air, fly-tipping and care of the green spaces (Abington Park, Eastfield Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Vale Park, Wilson's Orchard, Billing Road Cemetery). If anyone is interested in these, or other environmental issues, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

Wool for Stella Maris Woolly Hats If you have any spare knitting wool for hats, please drop it off at the church for our knitters. Aran will make the cosiest hat! Seafarers & mariners love bright colours as well as the more traditional dark colour palette. Please avoid pastels as they get dirty quickly. If you would like more information or care to get involved, scan the QR code. Thank you, *Bob*



Next Alpha will be after Easter:

First session:	April 16th:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	April 23rd:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	April 30th:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 7th:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	May 14th:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 21st:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	June 4th:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	June 8th:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 11th:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 18th:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 25th:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	July 2nd:	What about the Church?

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 21st March: The Palm Sunday, Year B

Second Isaiah was writing during the exile of the Israelites in Babylon after Jerusalem was destroyed. The people are discouraged, in despair, and tempted to give up their faith in God. In today's 'servant-song' Isaiah offers consolation, recommending non-resistance and trust in the Lord.

Isaiah's words express our horror at the way Our Lord was treated. But, trusting confidently in his Father, Jesus "sets his face like flint", even though it is covered with spittle.

The Psalm moves from this mood to express unshaken faith, praising God for our redemption and the promised conversion of all peoples.

The hymn in Philippians rejoices that – unlike Adam – Jesus did not seek to be equal to God. But God raised him high, so that all

creation should "acclaim Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God the Father".

Jesus died at Passover, when Jews celebrated their freedom from slavery. The soldiers, the Jewish leaders, the inscription on the Cross, all ironically give Jesus his true title of "King of the Jews", the Messiah, who frees us from death. When Jesus dies, the first human being in Mark's gospel to recognise Jesus as "Son of God" is a Gentile, the centurion. All the disciples had run away when Jesus was arrested. Only some women watched, and they saw where he was buried.

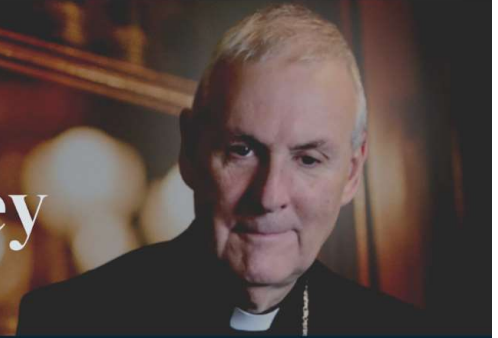
Psalm Response: **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

(Is 50:4-7; Ps 21(22); Phil 2:6-11; Mark 14:1 – 15:47)

Chris Oliver



Bishop David Oakley
Bishop of Northampton



Bishop David writes:

A reflection on this Passion Sunday Gospel may begin with a question, which Gospel? Many of us will hear the account of Jesus sending two of his disciples to the village to find a tethered colt. Jesus even gives the disciples the answer they must use if anyone questions them about this seeming act of theft. Jesus then rides into Jerusalem to a rapturous welcome from some at least. We listen to this Gospel before our liturgical re-enactment of this moment by procession into our churches. It's a strange story. We very easily get the sense that Jesus is in charge. He is not only the central figure in these events, he is director and producer too.

Things seem to change very quickly when we consider the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. This year we listen to St Mark's account of these events. The action begins in Bethany and the woman 'wasting' the expensive perfume over Jesus' head. There is much for us to ponder here. Are we so generous in our witness to our faith in Christ? Are we prepared to become disciples without counting the cost? Again, we need to hold this truth in our hearts. All this is about Jesus. This event is a mystical prelude to what Jesus will accomplish on the Cross. He will be obedient to the Father's will and lay down his life in love for us.

There is so much mystery in the story which unfolds. Again, disciples are sent into the city and invited to prepare the room where Jesus and his disciples will eat the Passover. This is not any ordinary table reservation in a local hostelry. The moment echoes the earlier one with the finding of the colt for Jesus to ride into the city. Now they must follow a man carrying a pitcher of water. Something in all of this may encourage our hearts to look forward to the Easter Vigil. There will be water there. The blessing of the font. Possibly baptisms, and certainly our renewal of baptismal commitment with the sprinkling of water.

At the end of the Passover meal, psalms are sung and Jesus and his disciples leave for the Mount of Olives. Things seem to change. The weakness of the disciples is very much on display. Something seems to slip away from Jesus himself. We hear the chilling words of the traitor, 'the one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge'. It seems that others are now in command. Despite the prophetic words of our Lord, 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the

Power and coming with the clouds of heaven', there is an inevitable impetus towards the death and destruction of Jesus of Nazareth.

The desolation reaches a new pinnacle when Jesus cries out from the Cross, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' And if others are assured this prefaces the end of it all, through the gift of faith, we know differently. We hear the testimony of one who came to faith whilst standing at the foot of the Cross. We too echo the words of the centurion, 'Truly this man was the son of God.'

Bishop David



Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7.00 am on Friday 19th July until 11.00 pm on Saturday 20th July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.

Fire Safety – Important notice. 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.

Pro Life Chain - Saturday 27th April 2024: Saturday 27th April, between 11am & 1pm, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. If you can join us or want more information, then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com