



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

In celebration of bird-song

Many people have commented on the way in which during lockdown, they have been more aware of the song of the birds.

People also have enjoyed walks in parks, and some, for the first time, have really become aware of nature, of the changing seasons, of wild-life and our environment.

We have benefitted from less traffic, less background noise, less air pollution and a generally simpler life-style.

Of course the coronavirus pandemic is a catastrophe, but we should find in the disaster what compensations there are.

A phrase that has come into widespread use is “new normal”. We don’t know what this ‘new normal’ will look like, but if it involves a greater appreciation of our natural environment; of the wonder of God’s creation; that is to be welcomed. It would be a waste of this time of lockdown if we were to learn nothing from it.

Five years ago today Pope Francis published his encyclical: “*Laudato si*”, and today (Sunday 24th May) is a worldwide day of prayer for a more just and sustainable future for our planet.

The theme that is given for this year is that everything is connected. We are familiar with the idea of chaos theory, so often expressed as the flap of a butterfly’s wing in Texas can cause a tornado in Brazil. In the days of coal power-stations in the United Kingdom, as well as pumping carbon into the atmosphere, we were also emitting a great deal of sulphur. Owing to the prevailing winds, this was being carried across the North Sea, and being deposited over Scandinavia as sulphuric acid — acid rain. Our pollution of the oceans is causing microplastics to be found in the sea ice of Antarctica. Industrial pollution is causing climate change throughout the entire world. Everything is connected.

The present pandemic has brought this home in a stark way. We cannot isolate ourselves totally; the world is an interdependent entity, and we all need each other.

In the twelfth century Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales) wrote that the air in Manorbyer (near Tenby, where he was born) was particularly sweet because it was blown from Ireland.

We may be an island, but there can be no secure border check against a virus; the good or bad that we do will have its impact on places far away, and on times in the future. Pope Francis’ encyclical requires us to take responsibility, not just for ourselves, for our country and for our generation, but for the world and for the future.

We should not be blind to the fact that there is an enormous desire for the ‘new normal’ to be exactly as was the ‘old normal’. Of course we want the good things of our previous life to be restored; schools for our children; pubs, restaurants, cafés; theatres and cinemas; shops and, employment. But we have learned that it has been necessary to sacrifice some of these things for a greater good; that of saving lives.

The ‘new normal’ might learn that, for instance, fair trade also saves lives. Just before “*Laudato si*” was published there was a devastating fire in a sweat-shop in Manila in the Philippines, killing 72 people who were making shoes for far less than the minimum wage.

Unless those who are motivated by the needs of God’s creation and the needs of the poorest, the powerful forces in the world will try to make the ‘new normal’ identical to the old normal, with the pursuit of wealth for the already wealthy as the prime objective. If that happens, our children and our grandchildren will ask: “Did we learn nothing from this experience?”

From the beginning of September until the feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4th, we will be celebrating again the “Season of Creation”, and we hope that the ‘new normal’ will be established by then. Before that comes, we need to have recognised what we have learned from the experience of lockdown and coronavirus, and what blessings can be drawn from what otherwise is a time of sorrow and distress.

“As they go through the bitter valley,
they make it a place of springs” (*Psalm 84:6*)

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who will come after us, to children who are growing up. What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? Now! Motivated by this question, there is a global campaign on the fifth anniversary of the encyclical letter ‘*Laudato si*’ on the care of our common home. I renew my urgent call to respond to the ecological crisis. The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor cannot continue. Let us take care of God’s creation, a gift of our good creator. Let us do this together, and may God bless you, and do not forget to pray for me.”

Pope Francis

Notices of Interest

An Important Notice Regarding the Celebration of Mass:

We are instructed that there will be no public Masses during the present crisis; however, Mass will continue to be said daily and this will be on the parish website and our parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>.

CAFOD Corona Virus online petition: Unite against the Corona Virus. We are living through the biggest Public Health Crisis in a century. Right across the UK it has been having a devastating impact on all our lives. Many people have lost loved ones. This is not a time for divisions. The world should unite in love and compassion. Out of love for our brothers and sisters please could you sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

Bible Alive for June is now available. As well as the commentary on the daily readings for Mass, this edition carries an article on "Faith in a Pandemic" and an article on Nicky Gumbel who devised the 'Alpha' course. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are on a table outside the fire door to the foyer during the daytime, with a box of (out of date) green envelopes. You can put the payment in an envelope and post it through the presbytery door.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: The regular Thursday adoration is not taking place during this present emergency.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please contact Deacon Michael direct (01604) 647750, E-mail: myf@btinternet.com for information.

First Holy Communion — 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation — 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 30th October.

Message from Pope Francis: In many parishes, it is traditional in the month of May to celebrate First Communion Masses. Clearly, because of the pandemic, this beautiful moment of faith and celebration has been postponed. Therefore, I wish to send an affectionate thought to the boys and girls who would have received the Eucharist for the first time. Dearests, I invite you to live this time of waiting as an opportunity to prepare yourselves better: praying, reading the catechism book to deepen your knowledge of Jesus, growing in goodness, and in the service of others. Happy walking!

Notice from the Diocese

Online Donation: The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

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)**

Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre: Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:

<https://cafod.org.uk/>
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

The Office: I can still access my emails, so if you need to speak to me please do email me at secretary@stgregory.org.uk. If you do need to speak to me by phone, I will be trying to get to the office on Fridays, so if it isn't urgent please leave a message, if it is urgent please email me with your phone number & I'll phone you back asap. Don't worry, any personal details (ie your phone no.) will be deleted as soon as I've phoned you back! If it's urgent that you speak to a Priest directly, please speak to Fr. Andrew by phoning (01604)713015 & choosing option 2 or 3.

God bless and stay safe. *Caryll*

Becoming a Catholic: For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

Tots @St Gregory's: As with other meetings, Tots has been cancelled until further notice

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

Live-stream Mass from Lourdes
https://www.directfromlourdes.com/lourdes_live_tv

Live-streamed from Westminster Cathedral
<https://www.churchservices.tv/westminster>

EWTN
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

On participating in Mass on-line or through television

It is better if you can avoid sitting in an armchair or on a sofa, and try to adopt the same postures as you would in church (sitting, standing or kneeling), and to speak the responses; please do not simply be a

viewer. On the back page of this newsletter is a simple prayer of Spiritual Communion.

Scripture Readings 24th May 2020, 7th Sunday of Easter Year A

After the Resurrection the beginning of Luke's book of Acts moves quickly from Jesus' appearances to the Apostles to a cloud "taking him from their sight". Returning to Jerusalem the nuclear church of about 120 people gathered in an upper room and "devoted themselves to prayer". These witnesses of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection united themselves with Jesus, now with his Father, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The psalm asserts complete confidence that God will not abandon but will rescue us, while asking for guidance and protection.

Peter continues his advice to keep the commandments with patience and humility, rejoicing in glorifying God by sharing in Christ's sufferings.

In John's Gospel just before his arrest Jesus ends his long instructions to his Apostles at their last supper together, having promised to send the Spirit to continue his work through the Church.

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

(Acts 1:12-14; Psalm 26(27); 1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 65: Solidarity with the poor: In 'Laudato Si' Pope Francis wrote, change modern culture by replacing consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity and wastefulness with a spirit of sharing.

Actions to LiveSimply : **Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype.**

Tip No. 66: Living Sustainably with creation: The symbol on the back of food packets that say "Yet to be Recycled" should read: this packet will pollute the seas, choke animals/wildlife and ruin the countryside. Refuse to buy it!

Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew

Nine Days of Prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit

Through the Novena, Fr Andrew is offering a daily meditation on the "Fruit of the Spirit", as listed by St Paul in the letter to the Galatians. These can be found both on the parish website (on the VIDEOS page) and on the parish page on Facebook.

We surely all acknowledge that we need the help of God; perhaps never more than now in this pandemic. We know that it is the Holy Spirit — the advocate — the helper — the One who stands beside us who is the mediator of that help. The Holy Spirit is like the power source of our life; the electricity supply to which we must be connected. Like electricity, which can power a variety of implements, so to the fruit of the Holy Spirit can be manifested in many different ways.

Electricity can be used to power a light to see the dust and muck in our house. The Holy Spirit helps us to see the muck and rubbish in our life. "When he [the Spirit] comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement" (*John 16:8*).

Electricity can be used to power a vacuum cleaner to get rid of the dust and muck. Through the Holy Spirit, our sins can be forgiven. "Jesus breathed on them [the Apostles] and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.'" (*John 20:22-23*)

The light which electricity produces is not just to shine on the duns and muck — on our sinfulness. It shines to help us see the way we

need to go. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." (*John 16:13*) It is the Holy Spirit that inspires our reading of the Scriptures and all the ways in which we deepen our faith.

The fruit of the Spirit is revealed in our life through a number of different manifestations. Nine of them are mentioned in the letter to the Galatians, but this is not an exhaustive list. St Jerome, in his first Latin translation offers twelve fruits, and St Paul lists others, for example, writing to the Colossians and to the Corinthians. In his letter to the Romans he expands on life in the Spirit: "To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (*Romans 8:6*).

The Novena begins on Ascension Day, and after Jesus has ascended, a voice says to the Apostles: "You men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking into the sky?" (*Acts 1:11*). The fruit of the Spirit comes from heaven, but it is directed to the earth. The fruit is realised in our relations with one another.

In nature, fruit is the seed-pod for the next generation, and the flesh of the fruit is the first food of the newly-germinated plant. This shows us that fruitfulness is oriented towards evangelisation; towards the next generation of Christians. In manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, we are whether consciously or not, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The barren fruit-tree was cursed by Jesus (*Matthew 21:19*). We are commissioned to "go and bear fruit" (*John 15:16*). May our faith be truly "fruitful in good works" (*Dowry Prayer for England*).

During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The June "Bible Alive" is available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.

