



# 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

## Day of Prayer for Vocations

The Sunday when we read the Gospel of the Good Shepherd is designated as the day of prayer for Vocations, and this is linked to the special collection for the training of priests.

This is, of course, important, but can give credence to the dangerous mistake that vocation is only to do with priesthood, or with the diaconate and religious life.

Vocation belongs to us all, and starts with what the Second Vatican Council called the “Call to Holiness” (*Lumen Gentium*, chapter 5). The Catechism of the Catholic Church devotes the entire third part to this: “The Vocation of Mankind”.

The call to holiness is not addressed specifically to priests or to the ‘professionally religious’ — it is addressed to us all. “You must be perfect” says Jesus (*Matthew 5:48*). This is within the ‘Sermon on the Mount’, which was addressed to the ‘crowd’, including the disciples, but to all who are followers of Jesus.

St Paul, writing to Christians in Rome: “To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints” (*Romans 1:7*). So this vocation belongs to us all. (The word ‘vocation’ literally means ‘calling’.) Having a vocation is not something special — we all have a vocation, and that vocation, that calling is to holiness.

So on the day of prayer for vocations, our first prayer must be that we should follow our own vocation; that we may grow in holiness. ‘Following’ implies movement or change, and if our life in Christ has not changed in some time, this may be an occasion to ask God how he wants us to change, to grow in holiness, to become more Christ-like.

If that is the first stage of vocation, it certainly is not the last! ‘Lumen Gentium’ speaks of this:

“The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father and worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. These people follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ in order to be worthy of being sharers in His glory. Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity.” (§41).

This paragraph then goes on to speak of different types of vocation in the Church; clergy, and authorised lay ministries, married couples and parents, widows and widowers, single people, the sick and the disabled; in fact, all Christ’s faithful as having a

calling, and speaks of making “a great contribution towards holiness and apostolic endeavour in the Church”.

‘Apostolic endeavour’ is the phrase that now is spoken of as being a ‘missionary disciple’. That too is part of our common vocation, although how that is worked out in practical terms will be different for everyone. “Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith” (*see above*). Like the people in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents, we must use the personal gifts we have received, whether they be in the form of talents and abilities or in the form of material possessions in the service of the One from whom we received that gift.

We rightly pray that those whom God is calling to priesthood, diaconate or the religious life (that is, to join religious orders) will respond to that call. But that is not sufficient. We must pray that all people will respond to God’s call to them, whatever that call may be. We must pray that we ourselves will respond to God’s specific call to us; first, to holiness, and secondly, to whatever particular task God has created us to fulfil.

For many years we have spoken of a shortage of priests. Certainly and very obviously, we are seeing fewer priests that we had 50 years ago. But far more dramatically, we are seeing fewer people at Mass that there were 50 years ago. Many people have put forward reasons for this, but one reason is clearly that the Church has failed in the task of ‘apostolic endeavour’ during that time. This was never solely the task of the clergy, and it needs to be understood as a genuine vocation to which all Christians are called in some form or another, ‘according to their own personal gifts’.

It is common for the saying “They should do something about it” to be heard, without defining who ‘they’ are, except that ‘they’ does not include ‘me’. If we take this day or prayer for vocations seriously, we should be saying “We should do something about it” and “What can I do about it?”

We have many parish initiatives including; Gregory Care, Hope Centre support, supporting the Life House, supporting CAFOD, music for Mass (Choir, organ, musical instruments), supporting Sacramental preparation as well as Alpha, and currently the kitchen upgrade project. Might God be calling YOU to any of these activities.

We must pray that all those who God is calling will respond to that call, but that must also mean that if God is calling ME, then I must respond.



# Notices of Interest

**Bible Alive** for Easter & May is now available. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church.

**Repository:** If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10am & speak to a Steward who will show you what to do & where to go.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

**First Holy Communion 2021:** The programme has started and is running through 'Loom', an on line platform used by many schools. Parents need to 'home-school' children. The programme is called "Growing Up Catholic", and there are 6 sessions preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, followed by six sessions preparing for First Holy Communion.

**Confirmation:** At last we have a date: 1<sup>st</sup> October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux!

**Re-Envisioning Catechesis:** The Church has recently produced a new version of the "Directory for Catechesis", which makes clear the link between evangelisation and the teaching of the Faith. One fruit of this is that the diocesan department for catechesis has been moved from NORES to the new department for Mission, and to help those who are engaged in Sacramental preparation, there will be an on line course over 5 consecutive Thursday evenings, starting on 17<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30 pm (ending at 8.45 pm) on Zoom. If anyone would like to take part, please let Fr Andrew know (by email, please), and the parish will make the booking.

**The Summer webinar series** started last Monday night. We had an excellent response from parishes across the diocese and beyond. Bishop David was great, really inspiring, humble and funny. You can catch up with the recording here: [https://pastoralministryoffice.org/summer\\_webinars/](https://pastoralministryoffice.org/summer_webinars/). Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm. Diocesan Summer Webinar: Divine Renovation week 2 *Rebuild my house*, reflecting on the challenges of parish life, and what some practical responses might be. With Fr David Boyd, parish priest of St Bernadette's parish, Erskine, Paisley. You can find out more and register here, [https://readalong\\_divine\\_renovation.eventbrite.co.uk](https://readalong_divine_renovation.eventbrite.co.uk). You can still find the Lent talks on the parish website and Facebook page based on a book entitled "Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic" by Matthew Kelly.

**Track and Trace:** The government have now released their app to support track & trace & we have a QR code which can be scanned to record your presence at church. This is not obligatory, but should help in the important task of controlling the spread of the virus. As responsible members of society, we should comply with this request.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

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

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

**Stewards:** We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the stewards who have made it possible for the church to be open and Mass to be said each day. The rules state that if there are no stewards, the church must be closed and no Mass can take place. However our stewards have done much more than that — they have exercised the important ministry of welcome; one of the ancient 'minor orders' of the Church, that of 'Door-keeper'. Until the Second Vatican Council these 'minor orders' were reserved to those preparing for ordination as priests; the Council recognised them as properly lay ministries. One of the great blessings of Vatican II was the recognition of the laity as having important ministries in the Church, and marks a significant change from the 'clericalisation' which had sadly crept into Catholic practice. The ministry of welcome is a vital part of Christian life, and when the pandemic is past, this important part of our life must continue; not with hand-sanitiser, but a warm-handed welcome to all who come to share in the worship of God. In the mean-while, a big 'Thank-you' to all our stewards. Your work on our behalf is very much appreciated.

**Parish Finances:** Thank you to everyone who has been so very generous during this lockdown. Our parish finances are reasonably stable. Your generosity is much appreciated!

**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)**

**Masses and Covid security in Lockdown:** It is of the greatest importance that the church is a place of safety from the COVID virus, & while clergy & stewards do all they can to have systems in place, there is a responsibility on everyone to adhere to government regulations & maintain the safety of **everyone** as well as themselves in church. While 'bubbles' & households may sit together, there should be at least 1 metre distance separating those not in the same 'bubble' or household & must wear masks. We are still allowed to come to Mass; this is in part because churches are safe places. It is up to us to keep the church safe.

**Face masks:** Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

**Pro Life Chain - Saturday 29th May 2021:** On Saturday 29th May SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. This act of silent witness is to remember the millions of lives lost to abortion since the Abortion Act 1967. It will take place between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm. Please consider joining us at this important event. Last year twelve pro-life supporters stood together in order to proclaim the pro-life message. It is not easy to take part in a public display in relation to such a controversial subject, but it is so important that we speak up for the most vulnerable in society, the unborn. If you can join us or want more information then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com) Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.



**Why Alpha:** Pope Francis has asked that every parish and every Catholic have a missionary heart. In 2019, over 5,600 Catholic parishes and organisations around the world ran Alpha with an estimated 310,000 participants. "I recommend Alpha; an excellent method for the first proclamation of the gospel." *Cardinal Raymundo Damasceno*, President of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference and Archbishop of Aparecida — Brazil. The on-line Alpha will soon come to an end, and then next Alpha course will, God willing, be 'in-person' on the hall, and catering helpers will be needed in the up-graded hall.

# Scripture Readings 25th April 2021, 4th Sunday of Easter, Year B

After healing the cripple in Jesus' name and calling on the people to repent, Peter and John were put in prison overnight. Peter then repeats his preaching to the Jewish leaders. The leaders cannot deny "a notable miracle has been worked". Undecided, they order the Apostles not to speak in Jesus' name again, and release them without punishing them – at least this time.

The Psalm is from the Passover Psalm heard on Easter Sunday, thanking and praising God for repeatedly saving us.

John's first letter insists that the love the Father has given us makes us his children now, anticipating already in some way what we shall be "when he appears". John goes on to contrast the righteous who do not sin with those who commit sin. You are either for God or against him – there is nothing between.

In John's gospel, after healing the man born blind, Jesus describes himself both as the door through which we can enter and be saved, and also as the good shepherd, whom the sheep know and follow. In contrast to the false shepherds criticised by Ezekiel, the good shepherd cares for his sheep, even at the cost of his life. Jesus emphasises that he is in control of his life, causing division among the Jews.

Psalm Response: **The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

(Acts 4: 8-12 ; Ps 117(118); 1 John 3: 1-2 ; John 10: 11-18)

*Chris Oliver*

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# New envelope time again!

This is the last week of the last set of envelopes, and new ones are in the foyer. In the next two weeks the planned giving envelopes for the coming year will be distributed. Many thanks to all who give so generously to the parish.

Anyone who would like to join the envelope scheme, or to start a standing order for the parish, please ask Fr Andrew.

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# Kitchen Makeover

Work is continuing in the task of upgrading the kitchen; both the kitchen and the store-room have been cleared out and much has gone to the recycling centre. It will take several weeks to accomplish, and thanks must go to those who have already given time to this work.

Volunteer labour will be gratefully received in due course. Cliff Snelling will project-manage the operation, and specific requests for help will come from time to time. We plan to complete this during the time that the hall remains closed due to the restrictions, and have it ready for when we can re-open for our normal use.



## Narthex revamp

The map which has been in the narthex for many years was intended to be a reminder of the global nature of the Church, and that we have people at St Gregory's whose original home was far away from here. The plan is that on the boards either side of the door will be the message "Welcome" in the language of every place represented here. You may be asked to help!

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# Last Thursday was "Earth Day"

The first "Earth Day" was on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1970, in response to a catastrophic event the previous year when oil and other industrial chemicals spilt into the Cuyahoga River and caught fire causing major environmental damage.

**In 2021** the extinction of habitats of wild animals, carbon dioxide emissions, destruction of the polar region's Ice Caps, sea level rise and contamination of fish stocks, Factory farming of cattle which causes of global warming and pollution of the air that we breathe are all important issues.

The UK is hosting [the G7 summit](#) in Cornwall between 11-13 June 2021, when heads of government from seven of the world's richest countries will meet to discuss plans for a global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The G7 meeting will be a key moment for world leaders to cancel unjust debts and tackle the climate crisis.

Like a dog not being just for Christmas, the earth is important every day of the year; we rely on the earth day by day, and must care for it day by day.

We therefore must make decisions day by day where these decisions impact on our environment, even if only in very small ways.

One set of decisions that most of us are making on a near-daily basis is in our shopping. When we buy food, do we just compare the price or do we consider other factors:

- ✘ Did its transport to the UK cause pollution?
- ✘ Did its production harm the environment?
- ✘ Was it cruel to animals?
- ✘ Is it cheap because of inequitable wages in other parts of the world?

*If the answer is Yes, Yes, Yes and Yes, should you really buy it?  
Is there an alternative which is kinder to the earth?*



## SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

<b>28<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26<sup>th</sup> Feb)</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>	<b>Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Diocesan Priests' Training Fund</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Mass Media</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Day for Life</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Peter's Pence</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>Apostleship of the Sea</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>Home Mission Sunday</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> October</b>	<b>CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1<sup>st</sup> October)</b>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Mission Sunday</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Bishop's Maintenance Fund</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Sick &amp; Retired Priests' Fund</b>