



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

Christmas Blessings

“Water means a lot. It means life.”

Fabiano, Uganda

Before they had a water supply, 14-year-old Fabiano was forced to walk for hours to gather water so his family could drink, cook and wash. In order to arrive at school on time, Fabiano had to walk five kilometres for water before sunrise – despite the dangers of traveling in the dark.

Thankfully, CAFOD built a solar-powered water pump in Fabiano’s village. Now he and his family can access clean, safe water to drink, cook and wash with. Fabiano also no longer has to walk for hours in the dark. This means he feels refreshed and able to focus in school every day. When he is home, he can easily water his vegetables. There’s now plenty to eat and extras to sell.

Once the pump had been installed in Fabiano’s village, he said: “We had water available right near our homes. We were so jubilant about it and happy about it coming here. We knew life would change.”



Thank you for your support.

Rather than giving specific and individual gifts to people who support the worship, mission and work of the parish, we have, for a number of years now, given a gift from the parish to CAFOD as a means of thanking everyone for their own particular contribution. This year we have given the gift of water for ten families.

This life-saving charity gift can provide families with a steady supply of clean, safe water for drinking and cooking. Using a water pump also means families can wash in clean water, keeping everyone safe from infection.

We are so blessed with our clean water, literally on tap!

The birth of Jesus is God sharing his greatest blessing with mankind, and the giving of presents is a small recognition of this truth. Our small gift of water is in the same spirit.

Warm Welcome

St Gregory’s hall has been offering a warm welcome since the cold weather began a few weeks ago, and we have been given a generous donation of food for anyone who comes. We are one of a number of places in the neighbourhood which are offering a place which is heated and providing food and welcome; between them all there is welcome throughout the week.

Each house that is heated is not only using up the energy supply which is not unlimited, and if the weather turns colder again (which is likely)

there is a risk of power cuts, but also is generating greenhouse gasses which contribute to our carbon footprint, and add to climate change. Taking advantage of the ‘warm welcome’ not only saves money; it also helps save the planet!

There are children’s toys, and we now have a Wi-Fi provision for any who are working ‘from home’, and continuous provision of tea, coffee and soft drinks. Please do make use of this facility.



22 Park Avenue North
Northampton. NN3 2HS

Website: www.stgregory.org.uk

25th December 2022 Christmas Day Parish Mass Book - Year A Page 41

Priest:
Fr Andrew Behrens ☎ 713015
E-mail: frandrew.behrens@northamptondiocese.org
Deacon:
Rev Michael Fleming ☎ 647750
E-mail: mvf@btinternet.com
Parish Secretary:
Caryll Comley ☎ 713015
Email: parish.stgregory@northamptondiocese.org
Safeguarding representative
Carol McNeil ☎ 621807

Sunday	12.00 am	Midnight Mass	Bishop Francis Thomas
<i>Christmas Day</i>	9.00 am	Mass	St. Gregory's Clergy Parish, Parishioners & Families
	11.00 am	Mass	
	4.00 pm	Mass (Syro-Malabar Rite)	
Monday St. Stephen	10.00 am	Mass	Altar Servers
Tuesday St. John	9.00 am	Mass	Roseanne Ogbata & Family's Intentions
Wednesday The Holy Innocents	9.00 am	Mass	Dec'd Members of the Pike Family
Thursday St. Thomas a Becket	9-11.00 am 7.00 pm	Holy Hours of Adoration Mass	Holy Souls
Friday The Holy Family (Page 43)	9.00 am	Mass	Edie O'Connell
Saturday Feria	9.00 am 9.45 am	Mass Confessions	Julie Moriarty RIP
Sunday <i>Mary, The Holy Mother of God</i>	9.00 am 11.00 am 5.00 pm	Mass Mass Mass (Syro-Malabar Rite)	Daniel & Sonia Thomas & Family's Intentions The Parish

Normal opening times: Due to the relaxation in restrictions, the Church will be open every day from 8.45 am until 5.00 pm, except on Thursdays when it remains open until 7.45 pm

Your Offering to the Parish:	Last Sunday's collection was £309.36. Thank you!
Standing Order gifts to the Parish:	Each week £590 is given through standing orders.
Donations through the Diocese:	An average of £116 is given each week.
Gift Aid benefits to the parish:	The value of Gift Aid averages £136 per week!
Cleaners This Week:	The Church is cleaned and sanitised daily by the stewards.
Counters this Week:	CC & CP

Many thanks to new Standing Order givers and the increase in giving.

Readings for this Sunday (Readers 9am: Kathleen Fisher; 11am: Frances Nyaley)

Isaiah 52: 7-10— see inside for details: *All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

Hebrews 1: 1-6: *God has spoken to us through his Son.*

John 1: 1-18: *The Word was made flesh, and lived among us.*

Readings for next Sunday (Readers 9am: Tony Wittich & Krysia Wilson, 11am: Kevin Santhosh)

Numbers 6: 22-27; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2: 16-21. (Page 46)

During this season Migrants & Refugees; Open-ness to God's Word;

of Christmastide. The Bishop, Clergy & People of the Diocese;

We are asked to pray for: Expectant Mothers.

Up, Down, Up, Down All together now.

The rates of Covid infections are bouncing around, but with no free testing, there can be little certainty of the true rate of infection. **However, on the basis of safety, we ask that everyone continues to be cautious.** Refreshments will be offered after both Masses, but please remain cautious. Please, everyone, think of the well-being of others. Please remember that if you are ill or caring for an infant or someone who is ill, there is no obligation to do what is impossible! Please pray for all who are suffering with Covid.

If you feel unwell, DO NOT COME

A New way to help the Cathedral Foodstore — Christmas Donation Gift Cards

Christmas Gift cards are available, priced at either £5 or £10, suitable gifts for those for whom you cannot think what to buy. The money helps to buy food for the Cathedral Foodstore, the card is your gift. Cards can be bought after Sunday Mass or from the parish office on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays

The number of food bags distributed each week is increasing, but so too is the cost of food. Each bag provides 2 days' worth of food, and two items of toiletries per bag. Research shows that when the money is short, toiletries are the first thing people stop buying. Your donations come at a time when everyone is under financial pressure so you are providing a life line to those in our community in most need. Many thanks

Please Pray for the Sick:

Debbie	Jean O'Neill
Fr Philip Swingler	Khanh Phan
Michael Spowart	Matt Murphy
Catherine Stratten	Deacon Rory
Diana George	Aileen Hasdell
Margaret Farragher	Katy
Peter Cawley	Sr. Margaret
Betty McKee	Teresa Redmond
Michael Woolmore	Kathleen Eyre
Leo Bell	Maureen Bell
Michael Rowback	Margaret M
Marion Gilbert	Bridget Devane
Sandra Coughlan	Margaret Refoy
David Pick	Liam Murphy
Denise Faulkner	Alex Zaloga
Peter Frost	Colin Smith
Jim O'Connor	Sheila Frost
Paul Gilbert	Sheila Dowling
Eileen Flanagan	John Hodges
Alyssia Wraxall	Bridie Walsh
Doris Jones	Jayne Miller
Gerry McGuinness	Elsie Smith
Frances Taylor	Florence Dunn
Glynis Garibaldi	Donald Green
Maire West	Theresa
Terry Hammond	Ester Snelling
Nora Scott	Thomas Boylan
Barbara Dmochowska	

Anniversaries:

May they Rest in Peace

Douglas Golding	Thomas Billingham
Louisa Percival	Irene Hearne
Nancy Ginnelly	Neal Cramphorn
Vita Cohen	Doreen Bowers
Beatrice Bowers	Joseph Casey
Joy Tomczyszyn	Tony Haynes
Eileen Newbury	Bill Condron
Antonio Pannese	Grace Johnson
John Patton	Rainer Neilson
Patrick Pattern	Adele Cond
Josephine Mullally	Juris Dimpers
Veronica Harrison	Eugenie Lesimple
William Blundell	Bob Pike
Peter Turner	Thomas Gilnagh
Philip Bartley	Grace Jones
Doris King	Noreen O'Connor
Mary Casey	Hannah Milner
David Metcalf	Catherine Stevens
Mary Seaman	Patrick Marshall
Irene Linnell	Josephine Morby
Frederick Nicholson	Kate Sykes
John Flynn	George Rosatti
Thomas Moran	Ellen Jubb
Mary O'Grady	

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER:

We pray that volunteer non-profit organisations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for December & January 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: We have had another successful year thanks to the loyal support of the parishioners, as well as customers from other parishes. We have been able to donate £1000 to our charities, divided between Gregory Care and the Hope Centre. I would like to give heartfelt "thank you" to the very small band of devoted helpers. Some of you may have noticed we have not been able to cover all Masses this year as there has been a limited response to my pleas for more help. None of us is getting any younger and it would be a shame if this service has to be curtailed. It requires only a few minutes after Mass and all stock is clearly marked. *Kathleen Healey*. PS There are still some Church Art Calendars and Diaries available.

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.

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 our website www.nymo.org/lux

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!

Save another date: January 2nd, at 7.00 pm. On January 2nd 1998 Fr Andrew was ordained Priest by Bishop- Leo McCartie, and this January will be celebrating his silver jubilee. There will be a Mass of thanksgiving on 2nd January 2023, to which everyone is invited.

Choir Matters: I have cancelled Christmas...practices, as we are now as fully prepared as we can be in the circumstances. *Alec*

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**

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.

A course on the Psalms: It is sub-titled “The School of Prayer”, with the invitation to ‘learn to pray like Christ’. The course will continue for three more sessions after Christmas; on 4th, 18th and 25th January.

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

The God who Speaks: The ‘Year of the Word’ continues and the Diocesan Bible Study sessions for the Sunday Mass readings are continuing. On January 18th there will be an introduction to the Year of Matthew (Year A in the lectionary)

Stella Maris Thank-you so much for all the knitted items this year! The Port Chaplin in Ipswich is most grateful & wanted me to pass on his appreciation. Stella Maris have updated its knitting section on the website. You can find it at <https://www.stellamaris.org.uk/knitting/> or pick up a printed copy at the entrance the church.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 16th Jan 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.

Flowers for Christmas: The usual envelopes for donations for Christmas flowers will be available from this week in the Narthex.

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

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

St Gregory's Brownies: St Gregory's has a Brownie Unit who meet in the hall on Wednesday evenings. We have some spaces due to some of our girls going up to Guides and would love to meet some new prospective Brownies. We are all aged between 7 and 10 years. Please get in touch with the leaders on tw.lewis@ntlworld.com for more information or a little chat.

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)**

Refreshment Donations: All donations given now from after Sunday Mass will be given to the Hope Centre, & added to offerings made at the crib. This will continue through Christmastide up to & including January 8th (Feast of the Baptism of the Lord). Last year we were able to send just over £1,500. So far, donations through Advent have raised just over £100.

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 25th December 2022, Nativity of the Lord, Year A

Around 720 BC Judah was threatened by many enemies. Isaiah advised the kings to stand firm, because the Lord would give a sign: “the maiden shall be with child”. The birth of a helpless baby gives hope for the future. But this future must be founded on justice and integrity. Early Christians adopted these words as a marvellous way to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

All three psalms invite all creation to praise God as king and judge, for he alone is God and he will make all things right.

Written over 60 years after Jesus’ birth, Paul summarises the gospel to Titus: a compassionate God chose to offer us the free gift of being “at one” with him. But God’s revelation of salvation in Christ demands we transform our lives and “give up everything that does not lead to God”. The reading from Hebrews tells us that God has spoken to us through his son, who is “the perfect copy of his nature”.

Luke places the birth of the Christ firmly in time and space. Jesus was a man born miraculously to a virgin in Bethlehem in Judea. The

peace and quiet of the undercroft, where animals gave warmth, must have been a welcome relief for Mary, after the noise and bustle of the inn. The simplicity of Jesus’ birth is important: God comes as a vulnerable baby to draw us into a relationship with him. The royal birth announcement was sent not to royalty, but to poor shepherds, outcasts excluded from Temple worship by their occupation. Joseph, of the house of David, named Jesus as his son. Jesus lived in history, growing up in Nazareth in Galilee.

By the time John’s gospel was written, Christians had come to realise that Jesus had existed as the Word of God before time began. So John’s prologue seeks to describe the complexity of the creator becoming part of his own creation.

(Midnight: Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 95(96); Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14)

(Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Psalm 96(97); Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20)

(Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 97(98); Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18)

Chris Oliver

Christmas Flowers in Memory of or Thanksgiving for:

The Eckett Family	The Keithy & Ronan families	Brian Woods	John Eyre	Anne & Arthur Eyles
Peter & Dorothea Macdonald	Derek Rumsey	Brendan Moen	Mary Moen	Angela McCraren
Andrew & Mary Macdonald	James Donnelly	Louise Short	Gilda Goodman	Joan Palmer
Michael Kearns & Family	Bill & Frances Currie	Mary Cashman	Michael Moore	Cathy Bicknell
John, Julia Cahalane & Family	The Tyrrell Family	Lily Swift	Leann Hannelly	The Pallett Family
The Liebe Family	The Emanuel Family	Anita	Malcolm Allen	Fred Jones
Italia & Ben Jacobs	Antoinetta Riseley	Stephen Goddard	Rebecca Holt	Louise Whalley
Carmen & Mick Prendiville	Aunty lil	Glen Coprall	Tina Doran	Elijah Isaac
Rebecca & Shane Isaac	Rod & Eileen Brewer	Jacqui Brewer	Paul Greaves	George Lord
Dec’d members of the Houghton & De Verteuil families				

Next Sunday is next year!

According to the Collins Dictionary, the ‘word of the year’ is ‘*permacrisis*’, which “sums up quite succinctly how truly awful 2022 has been for so many people”. (Alex Beecroft)

However, the two words ‘permanent’ and ‘crisis’ are in a sense contradictory. A crisis is not merely a disaster of some sort, it is also a moment of opportunity. It originates from a medical term in Greek, indicating a turning point in an illness; a change which indicates either recovery or death. Clearly this cannot be a permanent condition. To widen the understanding of ‘crisis’, it is a moment of opportunity; rather as we read:

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish.” (Deuteronomy 30: 15-18)

We live in an inter-dependant society, and the life and life-choices of others has its impact on us, and vice-versa.

If the present time is indeed a moment of crisis, it is important that the choices that are made are the right ones. The last census showed that over a third of the population claimed to have ‘no religion’. That is to accept a very narrow definition of ‘religion’. If we understand ‘religion’ as the worship of a god, and understand the meaning of god as being a person’s highest priority, the religion of many is personal wealth, or others fame or popularity. For some it is the success of their football team, for others the success of their political party. All these are ‘other gods’, and are the road to destruction and death.

We do know that the right road is the way of the true God. Pope Francis’ theme for World Peace Day on January 15th is “*No one can be saved alone. Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace*”. The point of ‘no one can be saved alone’ is that we are not simply seeking heaven alone, but in company of our friends, family and ultimately, with all humanity. The choice offered in the passage from Deuteronomy was not just addressed to each person individually; it was addressed to the entire people of Israel.

We are called not just to make the right choice for ourselves, but to help others to make the right choice; the choice for God. This is how the crisis will become the turning point from chaos and confusion to life, prosperity and salvation. It is a call to evangelisation.