



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.”**

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VISION

Thy Will Be Done

Quite often prayer is experienced as a simple, almost transactional, request for God to bless a decision we have already made. Lord, we ask, please allow my plans to come to fruition; please help me in my efforts; please support my strength and my resolutions. But what would our lives look like if we genuinely, in each and every decision, sought to follow God's plans for our lives?

The prophet Jeremiah, when writing from Jerusalem to those in exile, reminds us that God wants to be sought, wants to be found and wants us to flourish:

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

The prophet Haggai, telling of the Israelites return from exile, with Jeremiah's words in their ears, focus on the rebuilding of their own homes while the Temple still lies in ruins. Each new day is an opportunity to choose either our 'houses', our designs or to affirm our desire to give glory to God, to rebuild his Temple. (see *Haggai 1:2-13*)

It is this choice that shows that we are followers of Christ to those around us. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the particular gifts to follow his path. Through Baptism and Confirmation, we are anointed with the Spirit and these gifts (*Isaiah 11:1; Catechism of the Catholic Church §1831*). The gifts permit us to live out a life of grace; that is to share in the divine life (*Catechism of the Catholic Church §759 and §1997*). These gifts help us to choose the Lord's will and to see signs of the Kingdom, glimpses of heaven, the Lord with us, in our daily lives. They enable us to live as the family of God.



Each and every day, the Lord's Prayer is recited in countless languages and diverse cultural settings. Its familiarity provides a sense of unity for Christians worldwide, fostering a shared spiritual language. In some simple way, it recalls the prophecies of God's reign over the nations (e.g. *Zechariah 14:9 and Psalm 47*). Is not life, for Christians from every nation, the struggle between doing God's will and doing our own?

When prompted by his disciples to eat, after his encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus gave a cryptic response. Jesus told his disciples that doing his Father's will is what truly sustains him (*John 4:34*). He shows us that this line of the Lord's Prayer is not a passive request but an active engagement with God's plan for salvation (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church §2822*). The Father's will is done perfectly in heaven; Jesus teaches us to pray that everyone on earth – ourselves included – join the angels and the saints in serving the king, revering his holy name and doing his will perfectly, as it is in heaven.

The picture, reproduced from the 'The Heavenly Jerusalem' by Jacobello Alberegno is in the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. The picture is based on the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in *Apocalypse 21:10-27*.

Describe what you can see, what is happening?

What are the signs of life within the city?

How might you make real the kingdom of God on earth in the coming days?

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Martin Dabup
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. There is a small display of St. Patrick's Day and Easter cards. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

Bible Alive for Lent 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: Envelopes are available for donations for flowers on the table in the narthex. If you wish your flowers to be in memory of a particular person, please write their name on the envelope. This will appear in the Easter newsletter.

Missio: The 2024 Spring magazines ("Mission Today") are available for those who support Missio's work in the Foreign Missions in the red box at the main entrance to the church (narthex) & are in alphabetical order of surnames. If you normally receive one of these please take your copy to save us delivering them. Spares available at the back of the pack for any who would like to join in this good work. Updates on the progress of the church in many areas of the world; news of the seminarians; the Holy Father's monthly intentions; details of 20 martyrs killed in 2023. Contacts: Dorothy (9:00 Mass), Alec (11:00 Mass) and the clergy.

Gregory Care Give something up for Lent! We will be holding a table top sale on **Saturday 13th April** in aid of Gregory Care. We are appealing for new or very good pre loved items to sell eg bric-a-brac, books, toys, clothes etc. Can you give something up for Lent to benefit someone else? We are not talking house clearance! But if everyone could donate something, maybe that you no longer need, we would love to relieve you of it. We will be gathering things together throughout Lent please place items in the box under the table at the back of Church.

Dates for your diary:-

Table top sale **Saturday 13th April.**

Parish Picnic in the Park **Sunday 23rd June**

More details to follow nearer the times.

On Saturday 2nd March, Margaret and Barry Mizen will visit the St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral to share their incredible story. In May 2008, Jimmy Mizen, a 16 year old boy from South London, was killed in a scuffle in a local shop. Immediately following the incident in the bakery, Jimmy's parents, Margaret and Barry spoke to the media with a message of peace and compassion and not revenge. Margaret and Barry have travelled the country sharing their message of forgiveness and compassion. Margaret says: "For me forgiveness is about not wanting revenge and not being angry". They began the 'Mizen foundation' to help young people across the UK become those changemakers for peace and in the process, go on to help to make our streets and our communities so much safer for everyone.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 26th February 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 - Sat 30th Mar**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones! Many thanks to those who cleaned last Wednesday. It is very much appreciated.

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!!

Teaching Opportunities: There are several teaching job opportunities available at Thomas Becket School. Please see the list in the Narthex, visit <https://www.thomasbecket.org.uk/vacancies>, or see the list held by Caryll in the office.

Urgent Appeal- SPUC: In relation to the Criminal Justice Bill, Labour MP Dame Diana Johnson is persisting with amendment NC 1 which would effectively remove any legal safeguards with regards to a woman procuring her own abortion at any stage of pregnancy, up until natural birth. Please write to your Member of Parliament asking them to vote against the amendment when it is presented to MP's (date not yet known). For further information or for assistance in framing your letter please contact William Currie on wpcurrie@btinternet.com or text to 07393965643. Thank you

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

Choir Notes: Practices for Holy Week: Saturday mornings in Lent 11-12:30: Mar 2, 9, 16, 23. Next will be 4 May. *Alec*

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.

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.

You are invited to join pupils from the Northampton OLICAT Schools on their Lenten journey: Take time to be with Jesus to relive His suffering through the eyes of our young people in reflection, prayer and music.

As we prepare for the Jubilee year in 2025 as 'Pilgrims of Hope' you are invited to join our diocese on pilgrimage. There are plenty to choose from including the Shrines of Northern France in Oct. 24, Lourdes in Aug. 24, Walsingham in June 24 and Rome and Assisi in 2025. For more information on all of these pilgrimages and our diocesan walking pilgrimage, 'The Way of Our Lady of Guadalupe' visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/pilgrimage/>

Bishop David is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org

The Secrets of St Paul: A 10 week course on Zoom run by Mission Northampton, starting on Wednesday 10th January 2024 and running until Wednesday 27th March 2024, 7.30-9.00 pm. (Break for Ash Wednesday & half term: Wednesday 14th & 21st February). Book at: <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online>

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: 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.

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 18th February: The 2nd Sunday of Lent, Year B

In Genesis God sets a greater test of Abraham's faith than might appear: Isaac seems now to be Abraham's only son. His wife, Sarah, had persuaded Abraham to drive out into the desert his other son, Ishmael, with her mother, Hagar, the slave woman. God had promised Abraham would be father of a host of nations, with as many descendants as stars in the sky. How could this now come about? On the way Isaac had asked "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answered: "God will provide himself". Abraham's faith is rewarded and God renews his covenant.

The Psalmist offers sacrifice and grateful praise after God heard his prayer at death's door.

Paul urges the Romans to have similar trust in God. That God gave up his only Son to death shows how completely God loves us. Paul

insists that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

In our last reading from Mark's gospel until the Ascension, the disciples appear confused by Jesus' transfiguration. Although God has again confirmed Jesus as his Son, they do not understand how Jesus relates to Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets. After Jesus' resurrection they would realise Jesus had come to fulfil the whole of Israel's scriptures.

Psalm Response: **I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

(Gen 22:1-2,9-18; Psalm 115(116):10.15-19; Rom 8:31-34; Mark 9:2-10)

Chris Oliver



Bishop David writes:

Today we hear an account of the Transfiguration. We always listen to this Gospel moment on the Second Sunday of Lent. The Transfiguration is full of Old Testament images. God revealed himself to his chosen ones on high mountains. There the prophets were unable to look at his face. When Elijah encounters God, not in earthquake or fire, but in a still small breeze, he wraps his face in his mantle (*cf 1 Kings 19.13*). People who meet with God in the Bible are generally filled with awe and even fear.

All of this, and more, is present in today's Gospel. The message is very clear. The apostles are meeting with the living God when they encounter Jesus. And then those words of our heavenly Father, spoken from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him.' Jesus speaks to his disciples about what lies ahead when they reach Jerusalem. He will be crucified. Not something the disciples could imagine. He will rise again on the third day. Not something the disciples could understand.

As we listen to the Gospel of the Transfiguration this Sunday, how may we live this moment in our own lives? We may wish to commit ourselves to regular times of prayer. We can become so caught up with what we want to do for God, we struggle to simply rest before the Lord and listen carefully to what our Lord may be sharing with us. In our busy schedules, how is the season of Lent going? Are we finding ourselves caught up in the demands of daily life and struggling to find time to meet with the Lord in prayer?

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, when we pray, we should go into our room and close the door. We may want to take these words literally. But a great Carmelite saint, Edith Stein sees the "room" in this teaching as our heart. And what are we closing the door of our heart to? All the noise and chatter around us. I remember someone telling me last year, he had decided during Lent, not to listen to the radio between 8.00pm and 8.00am. It was a way to keep his heart a little more quiet and still.

Maybe there is something of the apostle Peter in many of us. We want to do something for the Lord. After all, there is so

much to do! During these days of spiritual conversation around our Diocese, with all the decisions we must make in the coming years, it's easy for us to begin all this with a quick prayer and then move on to the main business as we see things. Perhaps we need a radical change of mind. To my mind, none of our conversation will be of the Lord, unless we make time and space for the Holy Spirit to come amongst us, saturate us with the desire for Jesus, for holiness. 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'

Bishop David

PILGRIMS OF HOPE
AN EVENING WITH BISHOP DAVID OAKLEY

Bishop David will be coming to our parish on Monday September 9th to reflect on what it means to be a pilgrim of hope. He will answer questions from those present and pray together as a community. It will begin at 7.00 pm

You are invited to attend and invite those who wish to discover more of the beauty of our Catholic faith.

Born For This
BY JO BOYCE

Weston Favell Academy students will be taking to the stage to share a moving and powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross. The performance will be at St Gregory's Church at 7.00 pm on Weds 27th March (lasting approx. an hour) It is FREE to all. Donations welcome.