



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

The Bread of Life Discourse

Although this year we are mainly reading from St Mark’s Gospel on Sundays, for this week and the following four we are reading a very significant chapter in St John’s Gospel; the chapter in which Jesus speaks of the ‘Bread of Life’.

The chapter starts with the story of the feeding of the 5,000; this is our reading for today. It is linked with the story from the Old Testament of the time when the prophet Elisha, during a time of famine, fed 100 people with just 20 barley loaves and some fresh grain. We are told that these loaves were from the ‘first-fruits’, and this is significant. St Paul describes Christ as the ‘first-fruits’ (*1 Corinthians 15:33*) and in the Jewish Law required that the first-fruits of the field be offered to the Lord (*Leviticus 23:9-14*) and the first-fruit of the womb; the first-born had to be redeemed by a sacrifice (*Exodus 13:11-16*).

The offering of the first-fruits to God or to other people is a sign of detachment; indicating that a person does not put himself first, but puts God and other people before himself. This should be the spirit in which we give to the Church for the work of God and in which we give to charity. This was not a gift from the left-overs; it was the first and the best, and responded to the first call on our resources.

Although it seemed to be an inadequate meal for 100 people, it turned out to be more than sufficient; there was actually some left over. This sets the scene for the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, but not before we have responded to the first reading with the psalm. Our response is one of gratitude for the immense generosity of God. “The eyes of all creatures look to you and you give them their food in due time” (*Psalms 144:15 or 145:15*). We proclaim that “The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds” and that he is “close to all who call upon him from their hearts” (*verse 18*). It is he who feeds us.

There is another interesting part of the First Reading story. We are told that the man with the bread came from Baal-shalishah. The place cannot be accurately identified, and gets no other mention in the Bible. The name has a meaning — the Lord of Three Things. We are given no interpretation of this meaning, and there is certainly no suggestion that it is in any way referring to the Holy Trinity. He was an anonymous man from an unknown place. He might have been anyone, and he might be understood as any of us. Anyone making a significant offering to relieve the hunger of others. In fact, anyone who supports the Hope Centre, CAFOD, or any of the many charities to which we might make a contribution.

The second reading, from the Letter to the Ephesians, forms part of the series of readings from that letter, and is not chosen to link with the Gospel or the first reading. The connection is co-incidental, but it does speak to us of the ‘selflessness’ and charity with which we should bear with one another. The same spirit with which the man from Baal-shalishah offered his bread should mark our own behaviour. St Paul speaks of this as being a mark of unity in the Church, as we will see in the coming weeks as the one bread of life which binds us all together.

The Gospel acclamation speaks of Jesus as a great prophet, and this again reminds us that what we are about to hear is Jesus fulfilling in the feeding of the 5,000 the prophetic miracle of the feeding of the 100 by Elisha.

We saw a few weeks ago (in the Gospel of the 14th Sunday of the Year, Mark 6:1-6) how the people of Nazareth would not accept Jesus even though the miracles that he was doing were exactly in line with those of the great prophets of the Old Testament.

So we come to the Gospel passage itself. We are given a time of the year — ‘shortly before the Passover’, and a place ‘the other side of the Sea of Galilee’. We have the boy with five barley loaves; a quarter of what Elisha was given, but also two fish. A long way short of the number required, and a long way short of the great catch they were to make after the Resurrection (*See John 21:11*).

We are given much more detail about the Gospel miracle than from that performed by Elisha. Most significantly, we are told that Jesus gave thanks; making this Eucharistic in nature, and leading us forward to what we will read over the coming four weeks. In fact, the account in Mark which we will not read, is even more explicit over this: “Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blest and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people” (*Mark 6:41*). It is remarkably similar to the traditional words in the First Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass: “And with eyes raised to heaven, to you, O God, his Almighty Father, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples”.

As in the Old Testament story, there was plenty left over, demonstrating the infinite generosity of God. There were twelve hampers full of scraps, symbolic of the twelve tribes. In other words, enough for all. The Eucharist is an inexhaustible supply of food for all people and for all time, and will never run out.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for July & August 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: There is a display of cards in the Foyer. If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church on Mon, Wed or Friday mornings & speak to the Secretary who will show you what to do & where to go.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Monday 6th September, 7pm. Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: We are already planning our preparation for First Holy Communion next year! So if you have a child who will be in year group 3, 4, 5 or 6 this September and who would like to be involved in next year's programme watch this space! There will be more details in September!

Confirmation: At last we have a date: 1st October; feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux! The Confirmation will be at St Gregory's.

Catechists & Youth Leaders - Blaze: NYMO would like to bring together the Confirmation Catechists and Youth Leaders on 4th September at Holy Ghost Church, Luton, 11am – 1pm, to spend some time with them as they prayerfully discern the best way to evangelise and form our young people through Blaze. There are invitation cards on the table at the back of the church.

Readers at Mass: If anyone wishes to become a reader at Mass (Sundays and Weekdays), please contact Deacon Michael, which will enable us to prepare rotas for when some sort of normality returns!

Bishop David has produced a series of short talks focussed on 'The Church'. These videos can be viewed on the Northampton Diocese YouTube channel. Simply type 'Northampton Diocese' into the search bar on YouTube and click on 'The Church' playlist. All the videos in this series so far will be displayed.

SPUC: Help protect the lives of Unborn Children & send a message that abortion is harmful to unborn children & their mothers by joining this year's March for Life. The march is on Saturday 4th September & will take place in Central London. It is a great Pro Life event & it is encouraging to be with so many Pro Life supporters. For further details either go onto the March for Life website marchforlife.co.uk or contact William on 07393965643 or wpcurrie@btinternet.com. It is not enough just to say that we are Pro Life: we must take action to stop abortion & the terrible damage it is doing to vulnerable girls, women & their unborn children.

Mission Northampton: Mission Northampton will be based at the new St Thomas Centre at Northampton Cathedral, but be a town-wide project involving all the parishes & Catholic schools in the town. It is being led by Fr David Donaghue, & there will be a variety of initiatives to seek to proclaim the Gospel, & make us all better missionary disciples. Please keep praying for it, & for our own parish, that we may become all that God wishes us to be, & that, like the first Christians, we may be devoted to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship, to the Breaking of Bread & to the prayers. May we all be truly missionary disciples, & this a missionary parish.

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.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

New Pastoral Area: After much consideration and prayer Bishop David has re-amalgamated the two Northampton Pastoral Areas. The new Pastoral Area includes the entire town, together with Towcester and Daventry. Wellingborough and Rushden are now joined with Kettering and Corby. In practical terms for the parish as a whole, we continue to work closely with Sacred Heart and Billing, particularly in relation to preparation for First Holy Communion, Confirmation, continuing Adult Formation and in our evangelistic outreach. Canon Brendan Killeen continues as Dean, and we look forward to increasing co-operation with the other parishes of our new Pastoral Area.

Gregory Care Toiletries Appeal update: Thank you for your continued support & for your generosity. We will keep you updated!

Parish Finances: Continued thanks for the wonderful generosity that you are showing, to the parish, in the special collections, to CAFOD, Missio, and in gifts for the kitchen refurbishment.

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)**

Choir matters: I hope that from Sun. 25th July we will be able to have singing by the congregation, supported by the choir. BUT no MASK = no SING, & the 1m-plus spacing rule still applies. On that Sunday we will use the Missal Mass setting, including the Gloria which is sung as a duet between Choir & Congregation. Once Power Point presentations have been devised (thanks Rev Michael), the congregation will be able to join in singing hymns. The choir will have their first monthly practice on Thurs. 5 Aug; there will be lots to get through. The next practice will be 2nd Sept, just before the feast of St Gregory on the 3rd. The Anniversary of the Dedication of our Church is the Sunday following. As ever, new members are welcome to join us to improve the contribution the choir make in serving and praising the Lord. *Alec*

Northampton Street Pastors are looking for Christian volunteers, particularly more Catholics, to join their team. They offer support to vulnerable people on weekend evenings in the town centre. There is a training day on 7th August at Kingdom Life Church. If you are interested, please contact Teresa at northampton.admin@streetpastors.org.uk

The Catholicism Course: The "Catholicism" course is running on Tuesday evenings through the summer, starting at 7.30. While it does form a continuous course, each session does stand alone, so if you have to miss one or more, you can dip in to those you can. It will run on Zoom to start with, and depending on changes to regulations and if the participants would prefer, could change to 'face to face' later. There are ten sessions:

- 1 July 6th The revelation of God become Man
- 2 July 20th The Teaching of Jesus
- 3 July 27th God, than whom nothing greater can be thought
- 4 August 3rd Mary, Mother of God
- 5 August 10th Peter and Paul; the first Missions
- 6 August 17th Christ and the Church
- 7 August 24th The Eucharist
- 8 August 31st The Communion of Saints
- 9 September 7th Prayer and the Life of the Spirit
- 10 September 14th The Last Things

please email to Fr Andrew for the Zoom link

Scripture Readings 25th July 2021, 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Six books, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, tell Israel's story from the death of Moses until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC and the exile to Babylon. While individuals strived for political control, prophets criticised the worshipping of other gods.

Elijah had given his mantle to Elisha, who has been establishing his authority with several miracles for both Jews and Gentiles. As well as the feeding miracle we hear about today, Elisha also restored the Shunammite's son back to life and cured Naaman's leprosy.

The Psalm praises God's lordship over all creatures and his generous responses to all our requests.

After emotionally praying that the Ephesians may be strengthened by Christ dwelling in their hearts, Paul now urges them to follow Christ in the way they live.

Although this is the year of Mark, his gospel is short, so for five weeks we now read from chapter six of John's gospel. John has no institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Instead Jesus washes the disciples' feet, and his teaching on the Eucharist is given earlier, after the feeding miracle described today. We will see the range of reactions his teaching prompted, with some ceasing to follow him.

Psalm Response: **You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.**

(2 Kings 4: 42-44; Ps 144(145); Ephesians 4: 1-6; John 6: 1-15)

Chris Oliver

Hall cleaning progress and use.

Come and see! Today, after the 9.00 Mass there will be refreshments available. We are still following precautions against COVID, and please do not go against the social distancing guidelines, but if you wish, you are welcome to have a drink and

refreshment in the hall after the 9.00 am Mass, prepared in the newly-completed kitchen.

Refreshments will also be offered on Wednesday mornings after Mass for any who wish.

Job Vacancy: Diocesan Finance Supervisor –Bishop's House, Northampton. Full Time 40 hours per week: Start date: As soon as possible.

We are currently recruiting for a Diocesan Finance Supervisor to provide support to the Diocesan Accounts Manager and Chief Operating Officer on delivering the financial functions at Diocesan level and in our parishes. Full information for the position, detailing the specific experience and skills required can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/> or via email hradmin@northamptondiocese.com. Applications should include our application form, CV and a covering letter. The closing date for applications will be Friday 23rd July 2021 and interviews will take place w/c 26th July 2021

News from the Foodstore!

We as a parish are continuing to support the Cathedral Foodstore by supplying toiletries to add to food bags. The Cathedral supply these provisions each week to families in need from around Northampton. Please help us to continue our commitment to provide household and personal hygiene products. We aim to add 2 items to each bag and there are approximately 80 bag sent out each week which serves around 250 people. At the moment we have very little in reserve. (Except for baby products.) Please donate what you can, and continue to pray for this work.

Many Thanks

Gregory Care

Mission Project RE:NEW

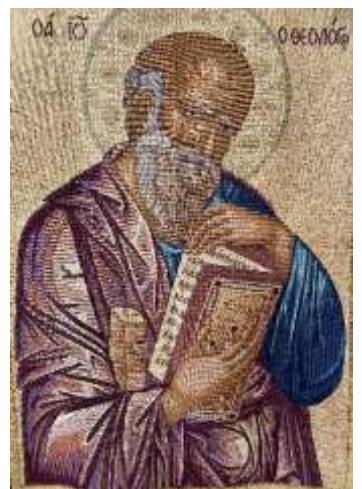
Fr David Donahue is setting up a new Catholic mission project in Northampton. If you are interested in being part of this exciting new initiative he would like to hear from you. There will be a prayer evening and presentation in early August. Please contact Fr David for further information: frdaviddonaghue@northamptondiocese.org

Have you noticed?



In front of the Ambo there has been a tapestry hanging. This changes from time to time, and for the past few weeks has been a representation of an icon of St Mark, but this Sunday is a representation of St John. This is to indicate the particular Gospel from which we are reading.

They come from a manufacturer in Italy, and Matthew is also available, but sadly, not Luke. However, there are many other images; Christ in glory, the Holy Spirit, Our Lady. These change as appropriate. In doing this, we are trying to encourage a greater attention to the reading of the Scriptures. This must be part of the cultural transformation that is needed in the Church which Pope Francis encouraged by his declaration of a 'Year of the Word', which, by God's grace, has become 'Years of the Word'. In doing this, Pope Francis is following a tradition that goes back in recent years to Pius IX and every pope since; it is not a deviation from Catholic tradition. The deviation is in Catholics who do not read the Bible, or do not pay attention to the readings at Mass!



SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021



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