



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 Grandeur and Misery of Man

Last Monday Pope Francis published an Apostolic Letter to commemorate the fourth centenary of the birth of the philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal — born on 19th June 1623.

Pascal's early life was overshadowed by the death of his mother when he was three, and resulted in the family moving to Paris, and in his teens his father was given the job of commissioner of taxes in the city of Rouen. Seeing his father seemingly endlessly adding up columns of figures, he revealed his mathematical and mechanical ability by inventing the first calculator. He also planned the first public bus service (in a horse-drawn carriage).

Blaise had shown himself to be a prodigy at mathematics from a very young age, but this was only a small part of his areas of interest.

From childhood, Pascal devoted his life to the pursuit of truth. By the use of reason, he sought its traces in the fields of mathematics, geometry, physics and philosophy, making remarkable discoveries and attaining great fame even at an early age. Yet he was not content with those achievements. In a century of great advances in many fields of science, accompanied by a growing spirit of philosophical and religious scepticism, Blaise Pascal proved to be a tireless seeker of truth, a “restless” spirit, open to ever new and greater horizons.

Pascal is credited with great developments in the field of the theory of probability as well as the invention of the hydraulic press and the syringe, and laid the foundations of the theory that led to the use of barometric pressure to measure altitude.

In this regard, Pascal speaks to our own times, for he reminds us of the grandeur of human reason and encourages us to employ it in understanding the mysteries of the world around us. His grasp of mathematics, the ability to understand in detail how things work, would prove helpful to him throughout his life. In the words of the eminent theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar: “He trained himself in the precision appropriate to mathematics and natural science as such, so as to attain that quite other precision appropriate to the realm of being and to the Christian realm” (“*Pascal*”, in: *The Glory of the Lord, A Theological Aesthetics III: Lay Styles*) Pascal's confidence in the use of natural reason, which unites him to all seekers of truth, enabled him both to acknowledge its limits and to be receptive to the supernatural reasons of divine revelation,

With achievements in both mathematics and physics, it is probably as a philosopher that Pascal is best known. In his time, these were not seen as separate fields of study

“What is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him”. (*Psalm 8:5*) This is a fundamental question of life.

Shakespeare gives Hamlet the words: “What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?”

Brought up as a Christian, he was not always particularly religious, but when his father broke his hip, the two doctors who cared for him were followers of a then new heresy called ‘Jansenism’, which was to afflict the Church in France for at least two centuries. Pascal's sister became a follower of this heresy, and after their father's death, entered the convent at Port-Royal, the centre of this new heresy. Blaise did his best to persuade her not to do this, and after she had joined he made the observation that it “had begun to smell like a cult” (*quoted by Jan Miel in ‘Pascal and Theology’*). Many writers have accused Pascal himself of following this heresy, but Pope Francis defends him from this allegation. His life took a different direction following a deeply significant event.

On 23 November 1654, Pascal had a powerful experience that even now is referred to as his “night of fire”. This mystical experience, which caused him to weep tears of joy, was so intense and so decisive for him that he recorded it on a piece of paper, precisely dated, the “Memorial”, which he inserted in the lining of his coat, only to be discovered after his death.

Pope Francis sees Pascal as speaking to our generation as much as to his own.

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Pascal, as a lay Christian, savoured the joy of the Gospel, with which the Spirit wishes to heal and make fruitful “every aspect of humanity” and to bring “all men and women together at table in God's Kingdom”

Blaise Pascal, at the conclusion of a life that was brief yet extraordinarily rich and fruitful, set the love of his brothers and sisters above all else.

Pascal demonstrates the working together of faith and reason and of science and religion. Truly a message for today.

Unattributed indented paragraphs are quoted from the Apostolic Letter: “*Sublimitas et Miseria Hominis*” 19th June 2023

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Freddie Damien Minney,
Mia Jean Hardy
And Kathleen Francis Hosanna Connors
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

Car Park Safety: Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass - all stock is marked, so an easy task!
Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.

Bible Alive for July is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church.

Save the Date: There will be a fund-raising event for the Cathedral Foodstore featuring Fynnus Fogg on Saturday evening, September 2nd at the St Thomas Centre (the Cathedral Hall). More information later.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Church, from 10am-12pm.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 26th June in the Sacristy at 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Enrolment for 2024 will be in the autumn; please watch this newsletter for information nearer the time.

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Fire Safety – Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **MUST NOT** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

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

Dog lovers wanted! Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk

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)**

URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES

If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

Red Box / Missio Matters: The latest magazine is ready for Missio supporters to collect on a table in the entry space as you come into church. By the time you read this you will already be in church or even at home – you could always come back or collect your envelope next week. Everything is arranged in alphabetical order. What you don't collect will be delivered. It would save me getting lost again, delivering the material, if you could pick up your copy. Your financial support is amazing & never more needed than now but even more important is that we pray for missionaries & their work. This particular magazine is very informative as to the effect of your help. It is full of data which, as a maths man, appeals to me. Hope you like it too. God bless you all. *Alec*

Choir notes: The next choir practice is after evening Mass on Thursday 29 June, the Holy Day feast of St Peter and St Paul. *Alec*

Walking Pilgrimage - Becket Festival: Walk will begin at Northampton Cathedral at 1pm where the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, His Excellency, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía will lead a prayer to begin our pilgrimage. From there we will walk to the Holy Sepulchre Church, Becket's Well, St Peter's & the remains of the Castle before returning to the Catholic Cathedral for an ecumenical service at 3pm. At each stop a different denomination will be asked to lead a brief prayer before we continue our journey. We hope as many people as possible will join us for this journey of prayer. Contacts for the walk & prayer service will be Fr James Evans, frames.evans@northamptondiocese.org, and Saffy Tuckfield, Secretary to Bishop David Oakley bishopssecretary@northamptondiocese.org

Refreshment Donations: Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent	The Hope Centre
To the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time	Gregory Care
To the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	
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

Alpha in the Autumn: The sessions will start in September, and will be an 'on-line' course through Zoom. However, so that those on the course can meet face-to-face, there will be a welcome session the week before the official start, on Tuesday 12th September in the Hall at 7.15 pm. Please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha and the zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session. For any who live far away, we are sorry if you are unable to get to the 'face-to-face' session on 12th September, please do not let this put you off joining the course.

Mission Prayer

Heavenly Father
it is your will that we should make disciples of all nations.
We ask you to bless the mission of our Diocese of Northampton
and guide our hearts and minds
so that your will might be done
and your kingdom be build up here on earth.
We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
without which our work is in vain,
and we entrust ourselves to your beloved Son,
for we know that he is with us for all time, now and for ever.
Amen.

Assembly Insight

"Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than as Church which is unhealthy from being confined and clinging to its own security."
(Pope Francis: *The Joy of the Gospel*)

Prayer 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 June 2023, 12th Sunday of Year A

About 600 BC Jeremiah counselled King Zedekiah to be conciliatory towards Babylon, ruled by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah expresses his internal doubts but concludes that the Lord is indeed on his side, and asks that he will see his persecutors punished. Against Jeremiah's advice, Zedekiah revolted, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people led into exile.

The psalm implores God to save him from unmerited suffering. The reference in an omitted verse to "vinegar to drink" and the expectation that "God will save Zion" led Christians to think of Messiah Christ.

In his letter to the Romans Paul reflects on the redemptive mystery of Christ. Sin, the dreadful power that has gripped humanity from the beginning, causes both bodily and spiritual death. Like Adam, all people pursue their own desires in opposition to God's will. But God's free gift of grace makes life available to all.

The Ministry of Welcome — Our 'One Step Challenge' .This Week!

This Wednesday there will be the second session of the diocesan online course on the ministry of welcome, either at 11.00 in the hall or in the evening at 7.30 by zoom. There is no commitment implied in coming to this course, but the more people we can engage in this important ministry the better.

In Matthew's gospel Jesus has described the trials the newly commissioned Apostles will face in their mission. They will be persecuted and even betrayed by members of their families. But they should "not worry about how they are to speak" in front of judges. They "will be given at that moment" what they are to say. Today's reading insists they can have complete confidence in God and must not be afraid.

Psalm Response: **In your great love, answer me, O God.**

(Jer 20: 10-13; Ps 68(69): 8-10.14.17.33-35; Romans 5: 12-15; Matthew 10: 26-33)

Chris Oliver

Hannah Heath and Net Ministries

Hannah is having a meal to fundraise for her second year as a missionary with NET ministries. It will take place at 7.00 pm on Tuesday July 4th. You will receive two delicious courses of food, followed by a short presentation on what the money will be going towards. To book your place there is a £5 deposit (just so we know who is coming!). To book your place, please email hannahmaryheath13@gmail.com or come and speak to me after Mass. We would love to see you there!

Day for Life, Mission and Special Collections

We have become out of sync with the Diocese second collection schedule to try to avoid second collections on successive Sundays, and today we have the collection for the 'Day for Life'.

The stance of the Church in relation to the sanctity of life is well-known, and within our own parish, we gladly support the 'LIFE HOUSE' which supports women who have resisted the pressure to have an abortion, but face homelessness as a result of their decision.

It is a tragedy and a disgrace that abortion has become an industry in our society; that 'pro-choice' gives no choice to the victim and that money-making clinics can call themselves charities.

There is a moving message on line for the day, it can be found at www.cbcew.org.uk/df123-message and tells the story of Jane. She tells how she went to a Catholic school, knew about God and morality on some level, but for me, the culture spoke louder when it came to making decisions around sexuality.

This is a sadly all-too-common story, and as well as speaking to us of the specifics of Jane's experience, it speaks to us of the culture in which we live.

This culture, a culture of death and destruction is diametrically opposed to the culture of Christian life. It is not enough to be trying to change the law, good though that would be; what needs to change is the idea that we have a right to kill innocent life and that our ability to create life is merely recreation.

The imperative for mission comes from the command of Jesus himself, but the culture of our society show us what happens when we neglect mission, as we have done over the past fifty years. If we would like to see a change in our society, we need to engage in the spread of the Gospel. If we believe that Jesus has the answer to the problems of our society, we need to be active in proclaiming his word.

Please support the 'Day for Life' with your donations, but also please support 'Life for All', the message of Jesus (*see John 10:10*)

CALLED & EQUIPPED

The Diocesan "Called and Equipped" course is set to run for a second year this September, following a wonderful first year. We found that participants were empowered and energised by the course and not only felt more confident in their roles in their parishes but were inspired to grow in their relationship with God.

One participant wrote:

Through this course I have learnt many things, but mostly how to listen to God's calling, our inner calling, the ways to pray and a power of prayers, and recognise work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Over an initial weekend and 8 units, the course covers the basics of Catholic teaching, including the kerygma, Old and New Testament, Prayer, the Sacraments, Mission, Accompaniment and Catholic Social Teaching. The emphasis is on discipleship and practical application. The course does require commitment from participants as there are 24 weekly group sessions on Zoom as well as a retreat

and a safeguarding day. It is designed to help us meet the needs of our Church into the future.

Applicants must be recommended by their parish priest. Candidates can come from any ministry as well as those who are on parish councils and employees. Costs are divided three ways between the Together in Faith fund, the parish, and the individual (although we also have bursaries available so that cost shouldn't prevent anyone from taking part). Much of the cost covers the residential weekend, with the rest mostly going to our mentors who lead the groups each week.

There will be two webinar sessions to explain more about the course on either 14 or 27 June at 19:30 and would encourage anyone who is interested to sign up for one or the other at the Pastoral Ministry website <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/called/>