



# 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 Passion of Evangelising

We are now in the season of Lent, and Pope Francis is continuing his teaching on evangelisation at his weekly audiences. He had a two-week break thanks to his visit to Africa, but the series has resumed on 15<sup>th</sup> February, when he spoke about the ‘First Apostolate’.

“After having seen in Jesus the model and the teacher of proclamation, we turn today to the first disciples, to what the disciples did. The Gospel says that Jesus “appointed twelve, to be with Him, and to be sent out to preach” (*Mark 3:14*); two things: to be with him and to send them to preach. There is one aspect that seems contradictory: He called them to be with him and to go and preach. One would say: either one or the other, either stay or go. But no: for Jesus there is no going without staying and there is no staying without going. It is not easy to understand this, but that’s the way it is. Let us try to understand a little bit what is the sense in which Jesus says these things.”

What appears to be a paradox is actually quite simple. Jesus draws us to himself, and through the Holy Spirit, lives within us, so that when we go out we are not alone, but he is with us. But we need to support our relationship with him by regular Mass attendance, frequent Communion, private prayer and time before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. Pope Francis expresses it thus:

“It begins from the encounter with the Lord. Witnessing him, in fact, means radiating him; but, if we do not receive his light, we will be extinguished; if we do not spend time with him, we will bear ourselves instead of him — I am bringing myself and not him — and it will all be in vain. So only those who remain with him can bring the Gospel of Jesus. Anyone who does not remain with him cannot bear the Gospel. He will bring ideas, but not the Gospel.”

There is another side to this which is that the remaining with Jesus actually requires that we go out with him.

“Following Christ is not an inward-looking fact: without proclamation, without service, without mission, the relationship with Jesus does not grow. We note that in the Gospel the Lord sends the disciples before having completed their preparation: shortly after having called them, he is already sending them! This means that the experience of mission is part of Christian formation.”

We are pointed to chapter 10 of St Matthew’s Gospel, which we will be reading in the Sunday Gospels in late June and early July. This, Pope Francis describes as being like the ‘*constitution of the proclamation*’, and he recommends that we read the whole chapter in one sitting, not just as we will hear it read at Sunday Mass later in the year, and that we read it now and not wait until we hear it at Sunday Mass. Three points from this chapter are addressed: *why* proclaim, *what* to proclaim and *how* to proclaim.

### WHY

“You received without payment, give without payment.”  
(*Matthew 10:8*)

Because we have received freely from God, so we should give freely. “The proclamation does not begin from us, but from the beauty of what we have received for free, without merit: meeting Jesus, knowing him, discovering that we are loved and saved. It is such a great gift that we cannot keep it to ourselves, we feel the need to spread it. . . . In other words: we have a gift, so we are called to make a gift of ourselves; we have received a gift and our vocation is to make a gift of ourselves to others; there is in us the joy of being children of God, it must be shared with our brothers and sisters who do not yet know it! This is the reason for the proclamation. Going forth and bringing the joy of what we have received.”

### WHAT

“The Kingdom of heaven has come near” (*Matthew 10:7*). This is not the same as saying that ‘the end of the world is nigh’, it is saying that God is close to us, and Pope Francis illustrates this in three ways: closeness, mercy and tenderness. God is not remote or distant. As we have seen, he is, through the Holy Spirit, dwelling in our heart. And, unlike the parody of the preacher, he is not constantly telling us off, he is there to welcome the sinner. As he has welcomed us and forgiven us, we proclaim his welcome and forgiveness.

### HOW

“See, I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves.”  
(*Matthew 10:16*) Jesus does not tell us to become wolves ourselves; it is by our simple holiness, by our willingness to be lambs that we will succeed. Pope Francis quotes: “As long as we are lambs, we will conquer, and even if we are surrounded by many wolves, we will overcome them. But if we become wolves — ‘Ah, how clever, look, I feel good about myself’ — we will be defeated, because we will be deprived of the shepherd’s help. He does not shepherd wolves, but lambs” (St John Chrysostom, *Homily 33 on the Gospel of Matthew*).” Being ‘lamblike’ must be total; body, mind and spirit; it is not by arguing or clever speeches, sermons or homilies without the life to back up the words. However, what is important is testimony; being able to tell our own story of our experience of the love of God.

Pope Francis also makes the point that Jesus does not tell his disciples what *to* take on our mission, but what *not* to take! He expresses it thus: “Jesus says not to lean on material certainties, but to go into the world without worldliness. That is to say, I am going into the world, not with the style of the world, not with the world’s values, not with worldliness — for the Church falling into worldliness is the worst thing that can happen.”

In this chapter of Matthew we will find the key to proclamation: to *show* Jesus rather than to *talk about* Jesus. “Go forth, meek and good as lambs, without worldliness, and going together” (*Pope Francis 15/2/23*)



# Notices of Interest



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

**Repository:** The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! There is now a display of St Patrick Day Cards, Easter Cards and Easter Mass Bouquet Cards. We also 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](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com). PS: There are still some Church Art Calendars and Diaries available.

**Friday 3rd March is Family Fast Day:** We pray for all those whose crops and land are affected by the climate crisis, that they may have the strength and hope as they work to adapt to these urgent challenges May God grant us wisdom to care for our common home, the Earth, so that all people may flourish. This Lent CAFOD is supporting families with the skills and tools they need to fight the climate crisis. For example, in Bangladesh 14 year old Dristy and her mother Rupali are building seed beds and planting palm trees to protect their crops from flooding and cyclones. Do use the envelopes or give online at [cafod.org.uk/lent](http://cafod.org.uk/lent)

**The Good Shepherd Company, Holy Land:** The Good Shepherd Company from the Holy land (Bethlehem), which is based in Nottingham, will be in the Hall **this Sunday after both Masses**. Their goal is to support & help the Christian families in the holy land to stay at work, as olive wood carving is one of the most important sources of income for them - 90% of the Christians rely on this crafting. So selling their produce here on their behalf, will help to prevent the Christian community from leaving the country in search of better work opportunities.

**Refreshment Donations:** Through Lent and Eastertide our refreshment donations are given to CAFOD to add to the Lent Family Fast Day collection. Thank you for your support for Gregory Care. Please continue to give toiletries for the Cathedral Foodstore.

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

**Matilda, the Musical:** You are invited to join us at Thomas Becket Catholic School as our students perform **Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical**. Please see poster in the Narthex for more information. Tickets can be purchased in advance from the school office.

**Fairtrade Fortnight:** 27<sup>th</sup> February to 12<sup>th</sup> March. We are a Fairtrade Church & use Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar & other Fairtrade products in the Parish Hall. We encourage our parishioners to support Fairtrade. Due to Climate Warming some supermarket staples are at risk of becoming scarce & their future is endangered. The producers of these products need our support. Morrisons & Asda at this time are rationing tomatoes, cucumbers & peppers!  
*"The fields of the poor may produce abundant food but injustice sweeps it away" Proverbs 13-23*

**Choir notes:** the choir will be in attendance at the evening Mass on Ash Wednesday 22 Feb. After Mass, there will be a practice finishing at 9pm latest. This will concentrate on aspects of this year's Holy Week programme. Next practice will again be after Thurs evening Mass 2 March. If other practices are needed I will let people know.  
*Alec*

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

**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.

**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.

**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. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

**Encounter - Saturday 25th March 2023** Encounter enables participants to deepen their relationship with God as well as discovering a renewed desire to share their faith with others. This will take place at St Gregory's Church Hall. Please contact Maria Heath: [Maria.mission@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:Maria.mission@northamptondiocese.org) or <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/encounter-northampton/>

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be reported here shortly. 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.

**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)**

**Diocesan Employment Opportunity:** Fundraising Manager, 40 hours per week, Start date: April 2023. We are currently recruiting for an experienced Fundraising Manager to lead the development and delivery of the diocesan fundraising plan with the principle aim of proactively securing growth of income from charitable trusts, foundations and grant giving bodies. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/job/fundraising-manager/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to [hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org)

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

**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 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 1st Sunday of Lent, Year A

From Genesis we have the second and probably older description of the creation of humanity. This expresses the truth that God made us as “living beings”. By eating the forbidden fruit, man does “become like God”, able to make choices, but without the wisdom needed to choose well. Perhaps like a child’s growing self-awareness. The mischievous serpent later came to be interpreted as Satan.

This penitential psalm begs pardon for our sins, asking to be restored to grace and purity, and promising to make God’s mercy known to others.

Paul has been arguing to the Romans that righteousness comes only through faith. Human beings are unable to become righteous by following the Law given to Moses, which identifies – but does not help to avoid – sin. God offers righteousness as gift, through Jesus’ obedience to his Father.

In Matthew’s gospel the devil introduces each temptation with the words: “If you are the Son of God”, exploring what can it mean for Jesus to be “Son of God”? Is he a miracle-worker, able to satisfy all desires without effort? Is it about showy displays of power or trying to make God do what we want, in return for belief in him? Jesus dismisses Satan, showing his real power. Jesus will rule over all creation, but only through the Cross.

Psalm Response: **Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.**

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Psalm 50(51); Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

*Chris Oliver*

## Alpha beginning on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2023

A number of people have spoken of being interested in the Alpha course, but have not yet signed up using the on-line link at: [www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha](http://www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha). It is important that the Alpha Team have an idea of numbers as soon as possible, so if you would like to take part in this course, please sign up as soon as you can. If you prefer not to enrol on line, please speak to one of the Alpha Team who will ensure that there is a place for you. If you have any food allergies it is important that we know in advance.

First session:	March 14 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21 <sup>st</sup> 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12 <sup>th</sup> /13 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13 <sup>th</sup> 2023:	What about the Church?

### BIG LUNCH



Gregory Care — Save the date!!—  
Monday 8th May

We are planning a community “Big Lunch” and afternoon activities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Details to follow so watch this space.

### CAFOD LENT FAST DAY

Is **ONE DAY** the best we can do to support the work of CAFOD and the enormous number of people facing disaster through earthquake, flood, drought, exploitation — disasters from nature or from ‘man’s inhumanity to man’?

Special collection **NEXT SUNDAY** but CAFOD box at the back of the church available every day.

### CAFOD BIG WALK

Kevin and Aideen Fogarty have signed up to do the Walk. We will together walk 200K in 40 days. We hope you will sponsor us in this effort. A sponsorship form will be available at the back of the Church, or you can go online to donate at <https://cafod.org.uk/give>. Thank you all so very much for your generosity!

## Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight begins on Monday of this week and runs until March 12<sup>th</sup>. We are committed to be a Fairtrade Parish; as far as possible we only buy fairly traded goods for the hall and the church. But the parish is actually the people, not simply the organisation, and these two weeks are an annual opportunity to re-assess our buying habits. With the enormous cost of living increase, it is understandable that most of us will be looking for cheaper produce, but Fairtrade is not always more expensive. We are rightfully ashamed of those in the past who engaged in the slave trade, but today the slogan ‘A fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work’ is valid for farmers in developing countries as it is for farmers and others in this country. Please look out for the Fairtrade logo when you go shopping.

## Gregory Care

The Cathedral Food Store and Gregory Care continue to see the hardship experienced by individuals and families as a result of the economic climate. Thankfully due to the generosity of parishioners and supporters we are able to provide the material support required. Over the past couple of weeks in addition to our weekly toiletry collections we have been very grateful to receive two substantial food donations from the Co-Op on Bushland Rd, this was arranged by a St Gregory’s parishioner who works at the shop. Also a gentleman donated approximately £405 in loose change which he had collected over many years. Gregory Care and the recipients of our service very much appreciate the kind thoughts and support of parishioners. Please remember us in your prayers & be assured you are in ours.