



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 Return: What next?

We have now considered the first two of the three phases of the return to the Promised Land. The first is the rebuilding of the community; gathering the scattered children of the Church.

The second is the re-discovery of the Word of God, and the programme of Bible Study which we began before Coronavirus needs to be re-started and expanded. Both of these are important, and will form a central part of our parish agenda over the coming months.

Now we come to the third phase, which centres around Nehemiah.

He was a trusted official in the Persian court who was given the responsibility of governing Judea under Persian rule. How this came about is described in Nehemiah 2:1-8. This was in around 444 BC.

His first concern is for the walls of Jerusalem. How can Jerusalem be called a ‘city’ if it has no walls? He describes it as ‘suffering disgrace’ (*Nehemiah 2:17*). Enemies of the returned exiles try to prevent this work, and they have to go to extreme lengths to complete the task, working with a shovel in one hand and a sword in the other (*Nehemiah 4:15-18*).

In recent times the idea of building walls has come in for criticism, not least by Pope Francis, and for us on this island, the question of immigration is one which is politically highly charged. Just recently there have been pictures of tiny inflatable boats that have brought refugees and migrants to England. The issue of immigration underlay much of the ‘brexit’ debate.

For Nehemiah, the purpose of the walls was the protection of the population of the city, although he is also concerned about its prestige.

It has been observed that the story of the Bible begins in a garden, and ends in a city, and in considering the rebuilding of Jerusalem, it is worth thinking about the New Jerusalem. The walls of the New Jerusalem are described: “The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel.” (*Apocalypse 12:18-19*) The population of the New Jerusalem is described as those who “bring into it the glory and honour of the nations” (*Apocalypse 21:26*).

Nehemiah was also concerned about the population. One issue was the behaviour of the people. There were some who were comfortably off, while others were in poverty. He tackled the wealthy: “You are all taking interest against your own people” (*Nehemiah 5:7*). He continued: “The thing you are doing is not good” (*5:9*). The result was a cancellation of all debts, and a restoration of equity amongst the people.

We live in a similarly unequal society, and the burden of covid-19 has fallen disproportionately on those who were already most disadvantaged. At an international level, this is even more

pronounced. CAFOD have a campaign for the relief of international debt (see: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Pope-Francis-debt-forgiveness>), and while our government has gone some way to helping the poorest in our society to survive economically, it is important that the greatest part of the burden of the pandemic is borne by those most able to bear it, not by those least able.

For Nehemiah, there was another problem. “The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few” (*Nehemiah 7:4*). We could say the same of many churches. They are wide and large, but the people in them are few. The next verse begins: “Then my God put into my mind . . .”. This is important — what Nehemiah did was to follow the promptings from God, and for us, the first reaction must be to listen to God.

For those who were to settle in Jerusalem, the immediate task was one of house-building. That is not our task in the Church, but it is important that those who we hope and pray will come into the Church will feel ‘at home’ there. For so many people who have found faith and come into the Church, their expression of the the experience is that they have ‘come home’. ‘Home’, they say ‘is where the heart is’, and it is that sense of loving community that is so important. This is why the ‘Alpha’ process is so important. It creates community and generates a sense of home within the Church.

This takes us back to the first task which we looked at a fortnight ago; the rebuilding of community. It needs to be an inclusive community, a welcoming community, and in order to be this, the parish must be a ‘community of communities’. The parish is made up of many smaller communities; many people will be part of several such smaller communities. At the most basic level, there is the household community, and beyond that there will be an extended community of friendship or extended family. There may be other parish communities; Legion of Mary, Prayer Group, Choir, Wednesday coffee morning, Bible Study group, Altar servers, church cleaners, for example. These all need to be inclusive and welcoming, so that there will be homes for an extended population.

While the actual re-population of the Church cannot fully begin until the pandemic is past, the process of preparing for this can and must be in place, and the existing smaller communities must be supported and maintained during this time. In the meanwhile, we are seeing more people at Mass each day, although still many feel nervous about Sundays. (Actually there are fewer people at the Sunday Masses than on weekdays at present.) Please note the change of time.

We have these three phases of our return; the re-building of community, the renewed study of the Scriptures and the re-population of the Church, which is our mission.

Notices of Interest

Confession: Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.

Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre: Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:
<https://cafod.org.uk/>
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

The Office: Now that the Church is finally allowed to open, I am happy to see people during office hours. However, I must ask you to stay at the office doorway so that social distancing can be maintained. Thank you. *Caryll*

Bible Alive for July & August is now available. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

For Parents and Teachers. CAFOD have launched a National Assembly for schools. This amazing assembly can be used at home. It is all about CAFOD's 'Summer of Hope' and informs, inspires and encourages children, at a time when children may really need it. It is led by passionate youths and is a real must-watch!
<https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/Summer-hope-assembly>

CAFOD Corona Virus online petition: Out of love for our brothers & sisters please sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

Global Healing: The Bishops' Conference have produced a film entitled "Global Healing", which can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/global-healing/global-healing-films/main-film/>.

It highlights the state of our planet & looks more closely at the Pope's encyclical letter on caring for our common home – Laudato si'.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Following Mass on Thursday evenings there will be Adoration until 8.30 pm.

Tots @St Gregory's: As with other meetings, Tots has been cancelled until further notice.

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 20th July at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 0799908997 before you attend to book your place.**

First Holy Communion – 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation – 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 20th November (Note change).

Fairtrade: Nestlé have decided to stop using Fairtrade chocolate in their KitKat chocolate bars. This has come as a great disappointment to up to 27,000 farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji and Malawi. There is a petition asking Nestlé to reverse this decision: <https://www.change.org/p/ulf-mark-schneider-nestle-global-ceo-keep-kitkat-fairtrade> (Otherwise, have a break from KitKat.) So far over 27,000 people have signed, and there is an update on the petition website. As a Fairtrade parish, we should all be supporting this.

Notice from the Diocese

Online Donation: The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

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)**

Becoming a Catholic: For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

EWTN
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

Scripture Readings 26th July 2020, 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

After David's death his son, Solomon, became king. Until Solomon built the Temple, sacrificing to God in high places was acceptable. It was during one such sacrifice that God appeared in a dream asking Solomon what he most wanted. In humility Solomon asked for a discerning judgement, rightly earning God's praise.

The Psalm praises God's law as the supreme rule for life because it is designed to help us become who we are meant to be.

Paul continues describing life in the Spirit to the Romans. Christians should try to reproduce in themselves images of Christ by progressively sharing in his risen life. God prepares those called to do his work and cooperates with them. Each individual is called for some task in God's plan for salvation. Those who love him will share in his glory. This includes not only Christians and others of goodwill,

but also the Jews, "the ones he chose specially long ago".

Matthew's Gospel compares the Kingdom of Heaven to the greatest treasure found either accidentally or after a search, and then compares the Kingdom to a dragnet: the good fish will be kept and those of no use will be thrown in the furnace. There is a surprise ending: not all old treasures should be thrown away, some should be kept – like Israel's Scriptures, our Old Testament.

Psalm Response: **Lord, how I love your law!**

(1 Kgs 3:5,7-12; Ps 118(119); Rom 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52)

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 77: *Living Sustainably with creation:* As we come out of lockdown let us retain some of the positives that we found during the time.

Tip No. 74: *Living sustainably with creation:* be mindful of how we dispose of our facemasks so as to not pollute the planet again.

Actions to LiveSimply : Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype.

Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew

Residents of Northampton urged to taken action as cases rise.

Latest government figures published this week (22 July) show that the coronavirus infection rate in the borough of Northampton remains above the national rate (455.6 per 100,000) and regional average at 535.2 per 100,000. The rate of infection is increasing and the amount of positive tests are also increasing within the borough. This increase in the infection rate means that we need to take action now to prevent further spread of the virus and potential local lockdown measures.

The increase does not appear to be related to one specific incident or a single method of transmission, therefore residents of Northampton are being asked to follow additional guidance to that being shared nationally, to protect the local community and reduce transmission rates.

Councillor Ian Morris, Portfolio holder for Public Health at Northamptonshire County Council said: "We are concerned that coronavirus cases in Northampton remain higher than we would like them to be, so we are issuing a set of messages to the residents of Northampton to help us to start to reduce the level of transmission. "If you have symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, get tested and self-isolate. It is essential that the public follow the guidance and that everyone acts responsibly in reducing the risk of transmission and protecting those in our communities who are most vulnerable."

Tests can be booked online at nhs.uk/coronavirus from 6pm today or by calling 119. Home testing kits can also be ordered subject to availability.

Cllr Jonathon Nunn, Leader of Northampton Borough Council added: "We have been urging caution for a number of weeks, but now we are asking for action from our local residents. If we follow the additional advice provided now, and if we are successful in reducing our rate of transmission, we can avoid having to introduce further restrictive measures."

A mobile testing unit is being deployed in the town centre from Thursday 23 July through to [Monday 27 July](#), enabling more local people to get a drive

through or walk-in test closer to where they live. Public Health Northamptonshire and Northampton Borough Council are working with local community groups and key influencers within the local communities to ensure that all sectors of the local population have access to and understand the latest guidance.

This guidance is as follows:

"Cases are rising in Northampton, you and your community are at risk, act now".

- ✘ Limit contact with others outside of your household or bubble
- ✘ Work from home if you can
- ✘ Keep 2 metres from others at all times, use a face covering where you are less than 2 metres apart
- ✘ Avoid using public transport or car sharing, wear face coverings if you cannot avoid these
- ✘ If you have COVID-19 symptoms, stay at home, self-isolate and get a test
- ✘ Avoid meeting those outside of your household or bubble in an indoor space
- ✘ Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly for 20 seconds each time
- ✘ Do not share items with others outside of your household or bubble
- ✘ If you have COVID-19 symptoms, do not go to work, either work from home or report sick, self-isolate and get a test
- ✘ Even if you only have mild COVID-19 symptoms, get a test
- ✘ If you are contacted by test and trace and asked to self-isolate, stay at home for 14 days

We are now all asked to cover nose and mouth in church, except when receiving Holy Communion



During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The August “Bible Alive” is now available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.

