



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

You'll never walk alone

This is not to show support for any football team, nor to advertise a musical, but rather a reflection on the challenge of today's Gospel.

This is the 'Year of Luke'; that is to say, it is from the Gospel of Luke that the Gospel readings are taken on those Sundays that are not in any other season of the Church's year.

Before Lent we had reached the end of what is known as 'the sermon on the plain', the equivalent to Matthew's 'sermon on the mount'. We resume after the end of Eastertide and the two Sundays which follow Pentecost; Trinity and Corpus Christi after the Transfiguration and where Jesus begins his final journey to Jerusalem. As he goes he invites people to follow him, but warns them that this will come at a price: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (*Luke 9:58*). He tells another: "Your duty is, as you go, to spread the news of the kingdom of God" (*Luke 9:60*)

The first reading relates to this; it is the story of how Elijah, in response to the command given to him by God at Mount Horeb (*1 Kings 19:16-17*) anoints Elisha as his successor. Elijah calls, and Elisha follows. Luke's Gospel has several references to Elijah and Elisha: at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry when he warns the people about feeling superior because of their race, and he reminds them that Elijah was sent to a Sidonian widow during the drought in Israel and that Elisha healed Naaman, a Syrian of leprosy; (*Luke 4:26*) in today's Gospel, the reference to calling fire down from heaven is to the contest with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel. (*1 Kings 18:20-40*)

The three 'would-be followers' of Jesus present important questions. The real issues for us are to do with priorities. For the first, it is the home.

It is more than the challenge which many have accepted to leave their home, and travel to distant lands in the service of Christ and the Gospel. We may think of St Augustine and his monks who brought the Gospel to the south of England or Columba and Aidan in the north, and so many other missionary disciples of the past. In our own day there are many who make the same sacrifice, as missionaries or as aid workers.

Today there is another reminder of this, as daily we see on the news refugees from the devastation or war-torn Ukraine, or from earthquake-struck Afghanistan, or flood-ridden Bangladesh. We see the tent-cities of refugee camps as we sit in our so-much-more comfortable homes. Locally, we see the homeless who for one reason or another cannot enjoy the comforts most of us enjoy. Or we see the squalor of many 'houses of multiple occupation' where

mattresses are laid on every available piece of floor and as many people are crammed into tiny spaces.

Remembering Jesus' rebuke to the people in the synagogue in Capernaum, (*Luke 4:25-29*) we might ask by what right we enjoy a so much better standard of living than the people of other countries.

The second 'would-be follower' presents a more subtle problem. We recognise the burial of the dead to be one of the seven corporal works of mercy, and as such, a virtuous act in itself. The fact that it is also a family burial makes it even more poignant, but the question of family will arise in the case of the third person, so in this instance the matter is competing good actions.

The second man had a vocation: "to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God", and when God calls, we should not delay, nor make excuses. "Procrastination is the thief of time" is a saying from a poem by Edward Young entitled 'Night Thoughts', written between 1742 and 1744, and equally true today. It is so easy to justify delaying something that we should do by doing something else which is in itself, a good thing, but not the thing we ought to be doing!

"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another." (*A prayer of St John Henry Newman*) The second 'would-be follower' is told to follow his vocation and not to put it off.

The third 'would-be follower' again is delaying his plan to follow Jesus, but in this case, he is not told he mustn't, but rather given a warning. The translations are not clear; literally, it speaks of 'looking at things behind', which in the context of ploughing a field, is not a good idea. A glance behind is a different thing from looking at things behind. To plough a straight furrow, the ploughman must be looking forwards, not backwards.

To be a follower of Jesus is to be forward looking. St Paul expresses it like this:

I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(*Philippians 3:12-14*)

In following Jesus, we will never walk alone, for he has promised that he is with us to the end of time. (*Matthew 28:20*) We do not walk just with Jesus, but, as fellow-pilgrims, we walk with one another in the wonderful community of faith which is the Holy Catholic Church.

Notices of Interest

Bible Alive for July 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: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass and there is a display of Confirmation cards and mementoes. 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*



We welcome into the family of the Church
Noah Grealish Burgess
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Next date to be in the Sacristy on Monday 27th June, 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: The preparation now turns to the receiving of Holy Communion for the first time, and we look forward to this in May. Thanks also to the parents in providing support and becoming catechists for their own children.

Confirmation in 2022: Sessions will run on Sunday mornings from 10.15 - 11.30. Please join us for 9am Mass as part of this course. Confirmation Mass is Saturday 2nd July at midday.

Vocations to Priesthood: Vocations weekends are planned three times a year. These are weekends for men who are discerning priesthood. You may be in the very early stages of discernment & don't worry - you don't have to sign anything! You can take your time & meet priests who can share more about this incredible life. Priesthood is a gift to our diocese, & we would love to connect with you as you continue your journey with God. At any point you can contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Andy Richardson – (01582 502400) or vocationsdirector@northamptondiocese.org.

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)**

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

Pro-life Sunday, 10th July, Parish Hall: Yesterday approximately 500 of our brothers & sisters were killed by abortion in England & Wales. What is abortion? Who is being aborted? What is partial birth abortion? What affect does abortion have on women & their families? Do women suffer from post abortion grief & trauma? What can all of us do to help expectant mothers in difficult circumstances? As a Catholic do I need to care about abortion if it does not affect me? These & many more questions can be answered on **Sunday 10th July in the parish hall after 9.00am & 11am Mass.** Please join us for a coffee & chat about this important subject. For further info, please contact William at wpcurrie@btinternet.com

Many thanks to everyone who supported the 40 hours prayer.

Prayer is the breathing of the soul, and the times of Eucharistic Adoration are important for the soul of the parish as well as for each of the people who take part as well as those for whom they pray. Each week there is a 'Holy Hour' on Thursday mornings; the church is open for private prayer every day from about 8.30 in the morning until at least 5.30 pm. Please make use of this opportunity.

Unholy Mathematics: We now have the full figures for the last financial year. Leaving aside the one-off expenditure on the kitchen, we have made a small surplus over the year. However, the energy bills for the coming year will be a problem. There is more information on our financial situation opposite. One significant help would be to make your giving through standing order; the details of our account are above, and if you pay income tax, please ask for a Gift Aid form.

Planned Giving Envelopes: If you use envelopes, please take your new box from beside the confessionals. Standing orders are managed by the Diocesan Finance Office, and the parish does not always have full details.

Wednesday evening Bible Study by Zoom: 8 week course on Romans led by Andrew Swafford and Jeff Cavins, subtitled "The Gospel of Salvation".

No session on June 29th Feast of SS Peter and Paul, Mass at 7.00 pm

No session on 6th July

Session 7, 13th July Chapters 12-13:

Session 8, 20th July Chapters 14-16: The End of the Story.

Please email to Fr Andrew for the Zoom link.

Choir Matters: Practices start after evening Mass, 1st Thursday each month: 7:45-9pm. Dates are July 7, Aug 4, Sep 1, Oct 6. Old age & infirmity are catching up with some familiar voices - including myself - & new members are needed... the view from the Gallery is great. *Alec.*

The Rose Garden and CAFOD: When the re-planting of the rose garden was being planned, it was hoped that this would be a help in raising funds for CAFOD. Our Lent giving from the Family Fast Day onwards has been accumulating, with the money given as donations for refreshments. After Pentecost the total will be sent to CAFOD. If you are inspired by the improved garden (and new fence in memory of Amelia Woolmore), please add your donation!

Food Parcels: Please get in touch with Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Tots @ St Gregory's: TINY TOTS look forward to seeing you: if you have charge of a pre-school child, from 9:30- 11:30 on a Tuesday morning, you are most welcome!

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**

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 30th June 2019, 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

The Books of Kings give some of the history of the two kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah around Jerusalem. They are mostly concerned with how many of the kings led their people away from God, and so ultimately into exile. And with prophets trying to stop them. By burning his plough Elisha shows his commitment to accepting Elijah's prophetic mantle.

The psalm expresses the Jews' total loyalty to God, keeping him ever in mind, confident of the resurrection he promises.

For Paul holiness and freedom are closely linked. Holiness is giving ourselves in love in the service of others. Paul tells the Galatians holiness can be developed and exercised only in relationship with others – ie in community. "The whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: Love your neighbour as

yourself". This new freedom is not freedom **from** restraint, it is freedom **for** love – the love of service to each other. "Self-indulgence", the "opposite of (guidance by) the Spirit" tends to disrupt community and is not acceptable in God's kingdom.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus refuses to call down fire from heaven on unwelcoming villagers, as did Elijah on Ahab's idolatrous priests. Instead, as he sets his face towards Calvary, Jesus gives examples of the unswerving faith and loyalty he demands.

Psalm Response: **O Lord, it is you who are my portion.**

(1 Kgs 19:16-21; Ps 15(16):1-11; Gal 5:1, 13-18; Lk 9:51-62)

Chris Oliver

Money Matters

At the time of writing we are in the grip of a rail strike, BA staff at Heathrow are threatening to strike in the summer and there is talk of teachers going on strike. Inflation is standing at 9%, but predicted to rise further, and most of us are inevitably facing a reduction in disposable income. The main driver of inflation is the cost of energy, and much of this is a result of the war in Ukraine.

This is causing a real problem for many households, and the take-up of food-banks is increasing, while at the same time, many people are finding their ability to donate to food-banks is decreasing.

The parish is also a victim of inflation as all our costs rise. During the summer the increase in energy is less significant, but we have to budget for a doubling of energy costs for the coming year. Last year gas and electricity cost us £5,807.41, and we must budget for £11,614.82 unless we accept less heating. The other big increase is in the levy that the Diocese takes from us to cover central expenses which need to be met. Last year that was £10,944.76; this year it is anticipated to be £19,457.28. The steep rise is necessary as over the past several years there has been an annual deficit, and this must be corrected. The main source of income for the diocese is its parishes.

Much of this rise is necessary to comply with charity law, and other legal requirements, and the fact that with fewer priests, the diocese is having to employ lay-people to do jobs that were previously done by priests. This is probably to the advantage of the church as the clergy are not always the best qualified many of these professional skills.

The Diocese is the legal charity which enables us to collect gift aid, and this means that our parish accounts are tied up in those of the entire diocese. Although our parish money is ours, it is held in an account which is linked with every other parish and department of the diocese. Centrally as many savings are being made as possible, but at the same time, the Church is rightly investing in evangelisation.

A big cause of our financial problem is directly related to the fact that fewer people are at Mass, and therefore fewer people are contributing to the parishes. The real motive for evangelisation must be the command of Jesus, but quite apart from that, if we do not evangelise, the Church will continue to decline. This has impact in every area of life.

The Catholic Church is the spearhead of the pro-life movement, and our work in evangelisation will strengthen that; the more active Christians there are in the world of politics, the more chance there is that governments will act ethically and make better decisions, and in every way the more Christians there are, the better. As Catholics we have a responsibility to fulfil the command of Jesus.

On a happier note, of total giving from the parish through second collections was £7,983.02. Our total income through collections was £59,989.30, which means that we gave away over 13% of what we were given. This means that we are more than tithing which is the Biblical standard of giving. (Melchizedek received a tithe [one tenth] from Abraham in Genesis 14:20)

The Parish is grateful for the many who give generously, and would like to encourage this generosity!

Volunteers needed — please help

Recently the Diocesan Surveyor inspected the church for any major repairs that may be needed. Fortunately there was nothing really serious, but he has asked that two bits of maintenance be carried out this year. Neither are difficult, and both can be undertaken by volunteer labour. Both are painting jobs; one of them is already spoken for, but the other will require a team of helpers.

The task is repainting the North aisle, where the wall has become discoloured due to water penetration when the roof gutter had become blocked. This was last done in 2011, and only took a week with a team of about a dozen people. Much fun was had in the process!

We cannot schedule when this is to be done until we know that there will be people to help. We will need painters, including people willing to work up the scaffold tower, but also labourers at ground level, and, of course, tea and coffee-makers. Please email to If you can help, please can you contact Cliff Snelling at cliff.snelling@btinternet.com, indicating which weeks you would be available to help.

We also need more people to join the rota for refreshments after the Sunday Masses, especially after 11.00. The hope is to have sufficient people so that it will come round not more frequently than one week in five. Please see one of the people with badges on to find out more!

DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone is surely aware that the country; indeed most of the world is facing a financial crisis. At the domestic level, this is acutely felt by every household. Of course, it is also felt by the Church.

One of the characteristics of the Church is that we are committed to giving to other needy causes, and every year it is our aim that we will give away at least 10% of the total money that we are given.

St Gregory's parish is recognised as a significant giver to both CAFOD and to Missio. CAFOD is the Catholic Church's chief initiative for providing aid and development for overseas countries. We have been supporting the international and multi-agency project which is seeking to ensure that every person has access to clean and safe drinking water, as well as the particular aid projects that are the focus of the Lent and Harvest collections. CAFOD is part of the international agency called 'Caritas', which is one of the biggest aid agencies in the world.

Missio is the Catholic Church's international missionary organisation. While it is primarily concerned with the proclamation of the Gospel, it is also inevitably concerned for the material wellbeing of the communities in which it works, and partners with Caritas wherever there is need.

We are not only concerned with overseas aid; we support local aid organisations. It was a parishioner of St Gregory's, Val Hanson who was instrumental in starting what is now the Hope Centre, and from the beginning, St Gregory's has been a weekly and generous supporter of their work in feeding the homeless in Northampton.

Our regular gifts of food are much appreciated, together with the financial help that is given.

More recently the Cathedral Foodstore has been established. This began as a means of supporting needy families during the pandemic; initially for families with children in the Catholic schools of our town, but now extended. St Gregory's made a commitment to provide toiletries, a frequently forgotten domestic necessity.

This is undertaken by Gregory Care, who also support those who live in the parish and are in material need, not simply by giving money, but by helping individuals and families to manage financially.

When we started to provide refreshments after the 9.00 Sunday Mass and on Wednesdays, it was decided that **ALL** the takings should be allocated to charitable concerns, with the exception of through the summer when we would use the money to buy the tea and coffee and other necessities and stock up.

This is how it works:

Now that we are offering refreshments after the 11.00 Mass every Sunday, we hope that this form of giving will grow. Following popular request, we are only serving ground coffee, and are committed to fair trade. When you come in for refreshments, please remember the good causes that we are supporting.

Alpha in the Autumn (Provisional Dates)

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which is in the hall and in person. It is highly recommended for everyone, and is very enjoyable. Each session starts with a good meal (A proper evening meal, not just a snack), then we watch a film together about our faith. After the film we have a conversation around our table about what we have seen and heard. Please come, and if you can, bring a friend. There is no charge, but donations are cheerfully accepted. For catering purposes, please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha

First session:	September 20th 2022:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	September 27th 2022:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	October 4th 2022:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	October 11th 2022:	How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session:	October 18th 2022:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	October 25th 2022:	How does God guide us?
Seventh Session:	June 14th 2022:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day:	June 17th – 18th 2022:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 21st 2022:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 28th 2022:	Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session:	July 5th 2022:	What about the Church?
Eleventh Session:	July 12th 2022:	What about the rest of my life?

How Alpha Works — and Why

Alpha works because it uses the same methods that Jesus himself used. It uses personal contacts. Jesus said to Andrew: "Come and see" (*John 1:39*), and it is the same invitation that we make. Like Jesus, who so often in the Gospels is seen at a meal with others, Alpha is set in the context of a meal. It is not Mass, but could be seen as looking forward to when everyone at Alpha can share in the Eucharistic meal — what theologians call an 'allegory' of the Mass. St Paul speaks of 'children in the faith' not being ready for solid food (*1 Corinthians 3:1-2*), and Alpha is like coming to see Jesus in the person of some of his disciples. Having 'come and seen', people are free to make their own decision. Thankfully, many decide to get to know Jesus better. Alpha is also ideal for the Church community as it uses so many different talents and skills, and does not force people out of their 'comfort zones'. It needs the talents of the cooking team; the team who prepare the room, the table hosts and table leaders. It needs the skill of the technicians, and of musicians. Above all, it needs the support of prayer, and it needs people to invite others to 'come and see'.

