



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

Evangelisation through Witness

Over the past weeks Pope Francis has been referring to many important documents, most importantly, from the Scriptures, beginning with the call of Matthew (*Mark 2:13-17*); the three parables in Luke, chapter 15, the ‘Lost Sheep’, the ‘Lost Coin’ and the ‘Prodigal Son’, the preaching of Jesus at Nazareth (*Luke 4:16-30*), the Mission of the Twelve (*Matthew 10:5-23*), the Council of Jerusalem (*Acts 15:6-21*). He has also quoted from many of the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

In his most recent address, he has invited us to look at the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope St Paul VI from 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Although written nearly 50 years ago, it remains relevant: Pope Francis says “it is as though it were written yesterday”. He describes it as the ‘Magna Carta’ of evangelisation in the contemporary world.

Evangelization is more than just simple doctrinal and moral transmission. It is, first and foremost, *witness* – one cannot evangelize without witness – witness of the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word in which salvation is fulfilled. An indispensable witness because, firstly, the world “is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* §76). It is not to transmit an ideology or a “doctrine” on God, no. It is to transmit God who is living in me: this is witness, and moreover, because “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* §41). The witness of Christ, then, is at the same time the first means of evangelization and an essential condition for its efficacy (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* §76), so that the proclamation of the Gospel may be fruitful”

Being Witnesses

It is necessary to remember that witness also includes *professed faith*, that is, convinced and manifest adherence to God the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, who created us out of love, and redeemed us. A faith that transforms us, that transforms our relationships, the criteria and the values that determine our choices. Witness, therefore, cannot be separated from consistency between what one believes and what one proclaims, and what one lives. One is not credible just by stating a doctrine or an ideology, no. A person is credible if there is harmony between what he or she believes and lives. Many Christians only say they believe, but they live something else, as if they did not. And this is hypocrisy. The opposite of witness is hypocrisy. How many times we hear, “Ah, this person goes to Mass every Sunday and then he lives like this, or that”: it is true, it is counter-witness.

The Christian Faith is not simply a set of dogmas, still less a set of laws. It is, above all, a life lived in a fruitful relationship with God, and this relationship reflects the very heart of God in the Blessed Trinity. It is a relationship which knows God as the creator of the universe, and which therefore lives in a respectful

relationship with our ecology. It is a relationship with the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ, and therefore in a respectful relationship with all peoples, made in the image of God, and in whom we can see the face of Jesus. It is a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and recognises the working of the Spirit in our prayer and conscience, in the writings of the Scriptures, in the lives of the Saints and in the power of God to effect transformation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that “all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness”. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §2013) This transformation is shown in holiness.

The witness of a Christian life involves a journey of *holiness*, based on Baptism, which makes us “sharers in the divine nature; in this way they are really made holy” (*Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium*, §40). A holiness that is not reserved to the few; that is a gift from God and demands to be received and made to bear fruit for ourselves and for others. Chosen and beloved by God, must bring this love to others. Paul VI teaches that *the zeal for evangelization springs from holiness*, it springs from the heart that is filled with God. Nourished by prayer and above all by love for the Eucharist, evangelization in turn increases holiness in the people who carry it out (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* §76). At the same time, without holiness, the word of the evangelizer “will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man”, and “risks being vain and sterile” (*ibid.*).

Pope Francis acknowledges that this is a ‘demanding path, a path of conversion and renewal’

This also entails the ability to change the ways of understanding and living its evangelizing presence in history, avoiding taking refuge in the protected zones of the logic of “it has always been done this way”. They are the refuges that cause the Church to sicken. The Church must go forward, she must grow continually; in this way she will remain young.

We must be in dialogue with the contemporary world, and while our fundamental relationship is with God in the Blessed Trinity, we cannot turn our backs on the rest of humanity, but must implement “good practices of hospitality, of welcome, of recognition and integration of the other and of otherness, and that cares for the common home that is creation.” We must allow “the Holy Spirit, the agent of evangelization, to enter. Without the Holy Spirit we can only publicise the Church, not evangelize. It is the Spirit in us that drives us towards evangelization, and this is the true freedom of the children of God.”

Pope Francis invites us all to read, or re-read the document he calls Pope St Paul VI’s masterpiece, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which is available free on the Vatican website.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 22nd March 2023

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Louie Benjamin Halling
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! 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.*
PS: There are still some Diaries available.

Grief to Grace: Grief to Grace is a specialised 5 day residential programme of spiritual & psychological healing for anyone who has suffered sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those who are the victims of rape, incest or abuse by a member of the clergy. For details please see www.griefftoGraceuk.org, email info@griefftoGraceuk.org, contact 02081542719 or see posters in the Narthex.

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

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

Missio/Red Box: Father Andrew rightly complimented us for our generosity towards a number of charities. The last Missio list put St Gregory's top parish in our diocese. Times are hard, but this makes your sharing with others all the more praiseworthy. Your prayers are invaluable. Envelopes containing the latest Missio magazine are available, in alphabetical order, on the table by the confessionals. I have left some spares for any new participants. *Alec*

Thomas Becket School Open Evening: Tues. 28th March 4pm – 5.30pm. Please book via Eventbrite or contact the school on 493211.

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.

Stations of the Cross: Malcolm Arnold Academy students will be taking to the stage to share a moving & powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross. The performance will be at **St Gregory's Church at 6pm on Monday 27th March** (lasting approx. an hour). It is FREE to all.

Church Heating: Weekday Mass and Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We 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 & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 27th March at 7pm in the Sacristy. 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.

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

CAFOD Big Walk: Kevin and Aideen thank all for their support. On 22nd March we have walked 160K together.

Gregory Care: Thank you for your toiletry donations, please donate if you can (as our stock is a little low at the moment) however the Food Store in general is thriving and so far we are managing to meet demand. God is good! Don't forget we have gift certificates for the Cathedral Food Store if you need a charity gift for Easter!

Choir notes: starting March 18, we need to have a very short practice (10 min max) after 11:00 Mass on each of the remaining Sundays of Lent to perfect a couple of tricky bits for Holy Week. *Alec*

Next week at Thomas Becket Catholic School, we are walking a mile per student & member of staff, hopefully 1000 miles in total. Form groups are also individually taking part in fundraisers & joining together in the 'Penny Mile' challenge. Our Youth SVP Group are planning a cake & bracelet sale on the day of the walk. We are being supported by CAFOD in the challenge. If anyone, friends, families, parishioners, neighbours, would like to join our appeal & help us to make this into the best Thomas Becket fundraiser ever, please join us. The link to the Just Giving Page is www.justgiving.com/page/tbcslentwalk2023

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)**

Vacancy - St. Mary's & St. Gregory's Catholic Primary

Schools: Lay Chaplain: Permanent – Part Time 4 days/week (22.5 hours) 38 weeks/year plus 5 training days. We wish to appoint a dedicated & highly motivated Lay Chaplain. Opportunity to work in a high quality, vibrant & caring environment where we share a rich vision for our pupils & for the communities in which we work. The full job description, candidate pack & application form are available from www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk & downloading from the Trust website: www.olicatschools.org. Email completed applications by 12pm on Sun 16th April, to Executive Head Teacher, Mrs Yuen's office at nduffy-pieterse@sg.nor.olicatschools.org. Interview date: Friday 21st April.

Thomas Becket Catholic School have a number of job vacancies, please look on their website for details.

Diocesan Employment Opportunities:

The Diocese has a number of job opportunities, and the closing date for applications for each of them is Friday 31st March. The vacancies are:

1. **Diocesan Information Manager**, (Part time)
 2. **Pastoral Ministry Office Administrator**, 10 hours per week
 3. **Fundraising Manager** (Full Time)
- More information & an application form can be found at <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/>. All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org

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 26th March 2023, 5th Sunday in Lent, Year A

For the Jews after 597 BC, exiled in Babylon without their king, land, Temple, all seemed lost as a nation. Ezekiel's encouraging messages gave them hope that the nation would rise and live again, like a field full of dry bones coming to life. But this will be the Lord's doing, for the sake of his name, which they have profaned by their idolatry.

In deep sorrow the psalm cries to the Lord, begging pardon for our sins, trusting in God's mercy and awaiting redemption in hope.

Writing to the Jewish Christians in Rome, Paul has been puzzling over our human condition: "I do not do the good that I want, but I do the evil that I hate". Mortal flesh is weak. "But God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" so that the Son's Spirit might give us the strength to live according to His Spirit. Paul's conclusion: with Christ's Spirit in us we are given life reconciled

with God both now and in bodily resurrection after death.

These foretastes of resurrection prepare us for John's description of the raising of Lazarus, the third of the three beautiful Lenten readings from John. Perhaps we should ponder how difficult it is to believe, and how difficult it was for Martha to open the tomb?

Psalm Response:

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

(Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 129(130); Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45)

Chris Oliver

Alpha began on March 14th 2023

The second week of Alpha examines the person of Jesus as recorded on the Bible. There is an interesting section in the film about the reliability of the Bible. Some think that the Gospel stories are no more than legends or myths, in the same way as the ancient Greek 'gods' and the Roman deities of the Imperial age. The fact that the Jewish historian Josephus tells us of Jesus, while not recognising our Christian understanding of him, yet records the reality of his life. There are more surviving biblical texts from early times than exist of many other documents from the first century that are completely accepted by historians, scientists, philosophers. Jesus cannot simply be dismissed as fiction or insignificant.

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

Gregory Care

UPDATE FOR CORONATION BIG LUNCH
Bank Holiday Monday 8th May 12 noon.


Our aim for this event is to bring people together as a community for a fun afternoon at little or no cost to individuals or the environment, with this in mind we would like to have a parade of 'crowns' made from only recycled materials (for both adults and children).

So start planning your crown! - recycle those Easter Egg boxes and wrappers and get your creative juices flowing-to further tempt you, there will be prizes!



Passover Meal

We have the opportunity to experience the Passover Meal in a Christian context, and interpreted for us so that we can understand the significance of the particular symbols of the Jewish Seder Meal and through it, better understand the liturgy of Maundy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper



This will be on Wednesday in Holy Week, 5th April, starting at 6.45 pm.

There is a charge for adults of £12; children are free.

Tickets available now, please see Rayner Willnecker.

Penitential Liturgies

As is usual before Easter and Christmas, there will be penitential liturgies; at the Cathedral on Monday evening in Holy Week and here at St Gregory's on Tuesday in Holy Week; both starting at 7.00 pm. Please make use of this.

Easter Flowers

Donations for Easter flowers can be made using the envelopes which are in the narthex. Please bring them to the Sacristy; names of those in whose memory flowers are given will be in the newsletter for Easter Day

Arrangements for Holy Week

We are moving back closer to our normal way of life in the Church, and the Holy Week liturgies will be much nearer to what we have been used to.

On Holy (Maundy) Thursday, there will be the Mass of Chrism in the Cathedral at 11.00 am, and in the evening the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7.00 pm, which will be followed by the watch until midnight. Thus begins the 'Triduum'.

This is the 'Three Holy Days' and continued with Good Friday. There will be a children's liturgy in the morning and the 'Walk of Witness'; the main service will be the Solemn Liturgy of the day at 3.00 pm, followed by individual veneration of the Cross. Holy Saturday ends at 9.00 pm with the Easter Vigil, the most important liturgy of the year. Easter Day .