



# 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

# Confirmation

We, and, above all, our candidates for Confirmation have waited a long time for this day — Friday of this week — when they will receive the great gift of the strengthening of the Holy Spirit.

Pope Paul VI wrote in his Apostolic Constitution for the present Rite of Confirmation:

“The sharing in the divine nature given to individuals through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. Born anew by Baptism, the faithful are strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation and ultimately are sustained by the food of eternal life in the Eucharist. By means of these Sacraments of Christian Initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.”

Confirmation is the completion of Baptism, and together with the receiving of Holy Communion, make up the fullness of the process of becoming a Christian. This completeness is celebrated and re-affirmed at every Mass. In each Eucharistic Prayer there is a very significant petition which is often overlooked, for example:

“Grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with the Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ” (*3<sup>rd</sup> Eucharistic Prayer*)

“Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit” (*2<sup>nd</sup> Eucharistic Prayer*)

“Grant that, by the power of the Spirit of your love, we may be counted now and until the day of eternity among the members of your Son, in whose Body and Blood we have communion” (*Eucharistic Prayers for special needs*)

In the same Papal document of Paul VI, he speaks of the Christian receiving the Holy Spirit “as Gift”

Confirmation is about receiving a gift. It is God who does the confirming, not the person being confirmed; not even the Bishop although he is the channel through whom the Gift is given.

It is sometimes said that in Confirmation the candidate “confirms their Baptismal promises”. It is true that Confirmation includes a renewal of the promises of Baptism. So too does the Easter Vigil Mass; and indeed, every Sunday when we recite the Creed, we are re-affirming the promises of our Baptismal faith and in the Penitential Rite we re-affirm our rejection of all that is evil. If

Confirmation were only that, it would not be special at all. What makes Confirmation special is the Gift, given by God; the Gift of the Holy Spirit to make us strong — firm in faith.

Those who are to be Confirmed are called “candidates”. This does not refer to the current usage of the word, where it means people applying for a job or competing in an election. That use of the word only came in about 500 years ago. Church usage of words changes much more slowly! The Latin word “candidatus” literally means “robed in white” from the verb ‘candare’, meaning ‘to shine’. We may sing “Shine, Jesus, shine”, but it is the shining of the candidates that we look to on the day of Confirmation!

This takes us back to the celebration of Baptism when the person being baptised is given a ‘white garment’, which is the outward sign of their Christian dignity, and which they are told to ‘bring unstained into the everlasting life of heaven’. While not the actual white garment of Baptism, from which they will probably have outgrown, the use of the word ‘candidate’ reminds us of the white garment of Baptism. Whenever a priest or deacon prepares for Mass he puts on a white garment (called an *alb*, from the Latin ‘alba’ meaning ‘white’), again, a reminder of his Baptism. Likewise, the Altar servers wear white for the same reason.

Those who have been Confirmed and receive Holy Communion have completed the process of becoming a Christian, and now have the responsibility of living the Christian life, but also have the strength to live that life and overcome its difficulties. In Holy Communion we are given the food to strengthen us, and in the Gift of the Holy Spirit we have the indwelling power of God to inspire us to make good decisions. (*See inside for more on this.*)

In our physical existence we bear the image of God our creator. In the Holy Spirit we breathe the breath of God. In Holy Communion we receive the life of Jesus to help us to become more like him. In a sense, we are walking demonstrations of the Holy Trinity!

As Paul VI wrote and as quoted above, we “receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.”

Advancing towards the perfection of charity should be the desire of each one of us as we make our pilgrimage to heaven.



# Notices of Interest

**Urgent need for this week's Alpha** One of the Alpha participants said of the meal last Tuesday that it was a better meal than they had had in many restaurants! Congratulations to the Chef! This week we are short of someone to help with the washing up after the Alpha meal, but anyone who is willing to help is welcome to share in the food. We sit down to eat at 7.30 pm, and anyone who has never done Alpha might like to have a meal and then, just for one week, help wash up, but have taste of Alpha. If you can help, please see Catherine Mulligan or one of the clergy.

**Choir Matters:** I've been delighted recently by the addition of 3 new members to our choir, 2 of them men. This has enhanced what the choir can offer, though Covid prevents the choir being at full strength. All we need now is a younger organist to counter dodgy eyesight & weak knees (I refer to certain choir members, not me). Transition from keyboard/piano to playing the organ is easy & brings fresh challenges; eventually you learn to use your feet too! **Confirmation, by our Bishop,** is this Friday. To prepare for this our next scheduled **practice** will be 7:45 pm - 9.00 pm **this Thursday** instead of 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. I hope to cover the music planned for Oct. *Alec*

**Bible Alive** for October 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 now open after every Sunday Mass. We really need a few more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass – all stock is marked, so quite an easy task! A small display of Confirmation cards and mementoes is on display. *Kathleen Healey (01604) 629103*

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> October, 7pm. Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

**First Holy Communion 2022: Important amendment to time of meeting – see below:** If you have a child in school years 3-6 who would like to make their First Holy Communion next summer, please make a note in your diary or on your calendar for **17<sup>th</sup> October, after the 12 noon Mass.** At this meeting, the programme for this year & the commitment to the programme will be explained & registration will take place. **It is essential that your child/children, & at least one parent attend this meeting.** The meeting will be held in the Church hall after 12 noon Mass & refreshments will be provided. We expect the meeting to be about an hour. If you have any questions please e-mail Stella Watts at [swatts49@outlook.com](mailto:swatts49@outlook.com) and we will get back to you.

**Confirmation – all Confirmandi are to attend: Confirmation practise session Sun. 26th Sept at St Gregory's Church after 12 noon Mass** (approx. 12.45 pm start). Confirmation for this group will take place on Friday 1st October at St Gregory's Church. Please check your emails from the Catechist Team for more information and get in touch with us if you have any questions. Thank you.

**Adult Confirmandi:** those who have confirmed their attendance at the Confirmation at St Gregory's on Friday October 1st – please check your emails & attend the **practise session on Sun. 26th Sept. after the 12 noon Mass** (approx. 12.45 pm start). Please check your emails from the Catechist Team for more information and get in touch with us if you have any questions.

**News from the Foodstore!** We as a parish continue to support the Cathedral Foodstore by supplying toiletries to add to food bags. The Cathedral supply these provisions each week to families in need from around Northampton. Please donate what you can, & continue to pray for this work. Many Thanks, Gregory Care.

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

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** We will be in the church hall from 9:30 – 11:30 each school week Tuesday! If you have care of a baby or pre-school child on Tuesday mornings why not join our very friendly and fun group? We only charge £1 for an adult and however many children they bring and this includes snack and all activities!

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

**Parish Finances:** Continued thanks for the wonderful generosity that you are showing to the parish, in the special collections, CAFOD, Missio, and gifts for the kitchen refurbishment.

**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)**

**RE:NEW Catholic Mission Event** Saturday 2nd October sees the first monthly 'Saturday Session' mission event at the St Thomas Cathedral Centre. Beginning at 10.00 am until 12 noon, there will be refreshments, live worship music, inspiring testimonies and talks. There will be opportunities for prayer ministry and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We hope to create an environment of hospitality and faith that will inspire those who are searching for meaning in their lives. Why not think about who you could invite? Also, a great opportunity to visit the new Cathedral Café 1850 which is open from 9.00 am. For more information contact [frdaviddonaghue@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:frdaviddonaghue@northamptondiocese.org)

**Spotlight Meet:** Monday, 27th Sept, NYMO are holding an online event, looking at the value of Youth Alpha for young people in the Catholic Church. Event will be held on Zoom, to make it easy for as many people as possible to attend. Jordan Kelly from Alpha will present on the night. Session starts at 7.00 pm, & finishes at 8.30 pm. To register, email [info@nymo.org](mailto:info@nymo.org). For more info, see [nymo.org/spotlight](http://nymo.org/spotlight).

**Youth Ministry Conference:** Saturday, 9th Oct, NYMO will be holding their annual Youth Ministry Conference, at the NYMO Offices in Luton, 11.00 - 15:30. Conference is for youth ministers, catechists, volunteers, priests, deacons & anyone who is interested in the future of young people in the Church. Places limited, so if you wish to attend, book online at the NYMO website. Tickets are just £10 per person. For more information, see [nymo.org/conference](http://nymo.org/conference)

**Zoom course on the Mass:** Continuing on Tuesday evenings there is the Alpha course, and on Mondays there is a course entitled "A Biblical Walk through the Mass". There are three more sessions: Mondays, 27<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, starting at 7.30 pm. Please email to Fr Andrew for the Zoom link

**Courses for Readers:** The Bible Timeline course will start on Zoom on Wednesday evenings, beginning at 7.30 pm. on 13<sup>th</sup> October. All are welcome, but those who proclaim the Scriptures at Mass are particularly encouraged to take part. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details.

**Cathedral Hub Administrator - Part Time 25 hours per week Start date: ASAP.** Full information for the position and an application form <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/> or via email [hadmin@northamptondiocese.com](mailto:hadmin@northamptondiocese.com)

## Scripture Readings 26th September 2021, 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

The Book of Numbers mainly describes Israel's wanderings in the wilderness from Mount Sinai towards the Promised Land. The people frequently murmured complaints against Moses, who found the burden of leadership too much to bear. Bored with the daily diet of manna, the people complain, so God gives them heaps of quail, but then punishes them for their greed. God gives some of his spirit to seventy elders to share Moses' burden, but even if the whole people became prophets Moses must continue alone as leader.

The Psalm rejoices in the way both the heavens and God's commandments reveal the glory of the Lord, while reminding us that we need cleansing from even our "hidden faults".

Our last reading from the letter of James reminds those who are well off that life is short and their sins will be punished. We should patiently share the earth's fruits until the Lord's coming.

In Mark's Gospel we hear Jesus' last teachings before he starts his final journey to Jerusalem. Like Moses, Jesus confirms that people may work in God's name even if they have not been formally appointed. God's work is not limited to formal organisations. Above all, we should keep our mind on God's kingdom, not be tempted away from it by the pleasures of this world.

Psalm Response: **The precepts of the Lord gladden the heart.**

(Numbers 11: 25-29; Psalm 18(19); James 5:1-6; Mark 9: 38-48)

*Chris Oliver*

### **A WEEKEND JOURNEY TO EMMAUS** *Hosted by Mission Northampton* **A heart warming journey with Jesus as he explains the Scriptures.**

Saturday, 10.00 am–8.00 pm and Sunday 10.00 am–4.00 pm:  
**a commitment to the whole weekend is essential.**

**Venue:**

**St. Thomas Centre, Northampton Cathedral, Primrose Hill,  
Kingsthorpe Rd, Northampton, NN2, 6AG.**

**Details of how to register & pay coming soon.**

**Please email your interest to: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk  
to reserve your place.**

## **Coming soon:**

### **“Catholicism — The New Evangelisation”**

“The Catholic Faith is not about myths or legends, symbols or literary devices. It’s about an encounter so overwhelming that you want to tell the whole world. It’s an encounter with Jesus Christ. Throughout history the call of Christ has sent people to the corners of the earth with a message of great joy — a message that has built civilisations, inspired cultures and even sent some believers to prison and others to their graves.

**We have the same call. That is evangelisation**

*A course by Bishop Robert Barron, delivered by Zoom!*  
Watch out for more information!.

## **Confirmation and Evangelisation**

Catholic faith teaches that Confirmation is the sacrament of strengthening, as the term itself (“*confirmare*” in Latin) suggests. First, it strengthens baptized people in their relationship with the Lord Jesus and then it further strengthens them in their capacity to defend and spread the faith. The roots of it, of course, are in the great day of Pentecost when, through the descent of the Holy Spirit, eleven timorous and largely uneducated men became fearless evangelists, ready and able to spread the Gospel far and wide. Keep in mind that to proclaim Jesus publicly in that time and place was to take one’s life in one’s hand—and the disciples knew it. And yet, on the very day of Pentecost, they spoke out in the Temple and in the public squares of Jerusalem. With the exception of John, they all went to their deaths boldly announcing the Word.

Now what makes this transformation possible is the third person of the Holy Trinity, who comes bearing a variety of powers, which the Church calls the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These include wisdom, knowledge, understanding, fortitude, counsel, piety, and fear of the Lord. In order to understand these more fully, we must keep in mind their relationship to evangelization and apologetics, to spreading and defending the faith. A dumbed-down, simplified Catholicism is not evangelically compelling. If one is going to defend the Catholic faith, especially at a time when it is under assault by many in the secular culture, one had better possess (and cooperate with) the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

In order to be an effective evangelist, one also needs the spiritual gift of fortitude or courage. Will the defence of the faith stir up opposition? Watch the news, read the papers, and

above all surf the Internet, and the question answers itself. It would be tempting indeed to withdraw from the arena and cultivate one’s faith privately, but confirmed people, endowed with fortitude, are meant to be soldiers of Christ, engaged in the fight. Some folks suggest that this phrase should not be used as it evokes the terrors of religious violence. However, the struggle of a soldier of Christ is to resist violence, not with the weapons of worldliness but with the weapons of the Spirit—peace, patience, kindness, and forgiveness. The gift of fortitude empowers the confirmandi to cope with opposition, ridicule or persecution.

Those who would spread and defend the faith also require the gift of counsel, which is the capacity to discern right from wrong, to know what God wants us to do in any given situation. As we move through the day, we perform hundreds of acts. Are we motivated primarily by the worldly desires for wealth, pleasure, power, self-protection, and honour; or are we motivated by a desire to please God? Counsel enables one to make the right moral decisions for the right reason. It is precisely this holiness, this consistent option to follow the will of God, that makes a person radiant and compelling to others—and hence evangelically persuasive.

Finally, the confirmed evangelizer needs the spiritual gifts of piety and fear of the Lord. Though these terms carry a somewhat fussy connotation, they in fact name something strong and bracing. They designate the capacity to place God at the absolute centre of one’s life, to worship God alone. The person of piety and genuine fear of the Lord (respect for God), does not run after every passing fancy, or devote herself to a variety of worldly goods; rather, her heart is set upon God alone, and every other passion or interest in her life is related to that central value. This right ordering of the self conduces toward integrity, and integrity of life makes a person saintly and deeply attractive.

*From an article by Bishop Robert Barron, February 2016*

## St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which we are hoping will be able to be 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. It is good to have established believers as well as potential converts and those who simply want to know more about our faith. 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](http://www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha)

<b>First session:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> September 2021:</b> Is there more to life than this?
<b>Second Session:</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b> Who is Jesus?
<b>Third Session:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b> Why did Jesus die?
<b>Fourth Session</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b> How can I be sure of my faith?
<b>Fifth Session</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b> Why and how do I pray?
<b>Sixth Session</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b> How does God guide us?
<b>Seventh Session</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b> Why and how should I read the Bible?
<b>Away-Day</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b> Who is the Holy Spirit?
<b>Eighth Session</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021</b> How can I resist evil?
<b>Ninth Session</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b> Why and how should we tell others?
<b>Tenth Session</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b> What about the Church?
<b>Eleventh Session</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b> What about the rest of my life?