



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

Over 300 questions, few answers

According to some scholars, the Gospels record over 300 questions that Jesus asked, while also noting that he gave a direct answer to very few. The exact number of questions is somewhat problematic as the same question asked in each of the Gospels appears to be counted four times!

Nevertheless, it remains true that, as recorded in the Gospels, Jesus asked far more questions than he answered.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his book “*Verbum Domini*” speaks of the “dialogue with which he (God) desires to have with us”. In that dialogue, God is asking us, rather than telling us. In this he is using a method of teaching that goes back many years before the Gospels were written, and attributed to the Greek philosopher, Socrates.

He is not simply telling us the answers to questions, he is encouraging us to think. When the Deuteronomic Law was written, the instruction was to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might” (*Deuteronomy 6:5*). By the time of the Gospels, when the lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, characteristically Jesus does not give a direct answer, but asks what is written in the Law. The reply quotes the instruction in Deuteronomy, but with an addition: “with all your mind”. (*Luke 10:27*)

The addition of ‘mind’ does not appear to come from Jesus, but has become part of 1st century Jewish understanding. It is fundamental to a proper understanding of the Bible and of the Christian faith.

There are some who want religion to provide the answer to every problem, as if to provide a rule book for every eventuality. It would have been possible for God, with his complete foreknowledge, to have left us in the Gospels the way in which we should prevent climate change in the 21st century or how to have prevented the wars of the 20th century, and all we would need to do is to look it up.

Were this to be the case, we would have no need for a dialogue with God at all; all we would need is to read his book. In fact we would have no need for a relationship with God himself, only with the book. However, this is not the story of the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament we read of God’s continuing relationship with his people, which comes to its fulfilment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and is continued as the Holy Spirit is given to the Church so that this relationship can continue to the present day and until the end of time.

God does provide answers, but it is by dialogue with him, not by a rule book. It involves loving him with all our mind; it does not provide ‘easy answers’; rather it looks for a loving response. How to understand this is shown in what happens next in the story of the lawyer who asks Jesus what seems to be a straightforward question. He does not get a ‘penny catechism’ answer!

The story is well-known; it is the parable of the ‘Good Samaritan’. (*Luke 10:30-37*) At the end of the story, Jesus asks the lawyer on which of the characters should he model his own behaviour.

This is clearly not the end of the story, even though the Gospel does not follow the rest of the life of that lawyer. We may hope that he would be remembering that at significant moments of his life; whenever he had the opportunity to help someone in need. More than that, he might have been remembering that story as a compass for his life. As a lawyer, he might have offered ‘pro bono’ service to poorer people; to migrants and asylum-seekers. He might have seen his role as assisting those who were victims of injustice, of oppression, of ill-treatment. Through his prayer, his dialogue with God might have continued, bringing him into a closer relationship and eventually into that eternal life which he initially sought.

The second reading from the letter to the Romans speaks of the depths of God, and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods. We want a simple answer — ‘yes or no’; ‘left or right’, but life is more complicated than that. Of course there are moral absolutes: the sacredness of life and the obligation to love, for example, but how these are applied in our day-to-day life needs the constant dialogue with God through prayer, through reading the scriptures prayerfully, and through our sacramental life.

In today’s Gospel we have an absolutely fundamental question from Jesus which we all must answer. “Who do **YOU** say I am? Jesus has gone beyond asking what we have been told, what others have said, what we might have read in a book — even in the Bible. Now we are on the spot. “**Who do YOU say I am?**”

Peter did not yet fully understand what his answer meant; his reaction to the arrest of Jesus clearly reveals this. (*see John 18:10-11*) The expectation of the Jewish people was that the Christ would be a military leader who would free them from the tyranny of the Roman empire and give them political freedom, not a saviour who would free them from sin and offer them eternal life. Peter still had a lot to learn, just as we have. He did learn more from his dialogue with Jesus; he learned even more when he received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but even after that he continued learning (*see Acts 10:34*) as he followed a life of prayer and sacraments supporting his evangelistic and pastoral life.

Every time we say the Creed we profess our personal belief in the Lordship of Jesus we give an answer to his question: who do you say I am. We are in a conversation with him. This is not to be bound by a rule-book, it is to live in a constant dialogue with God; in conversation with him through prayer, through active love for God and neighbour, nourished by our sacramental life and sharing our faith with those around us.

[*Thoughts inspired by an article in The Times on August 19th 2023 by Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP, Master of the Dominican Order*].

Joan Healy, ` died Thursday 24th August

Notices of Interest

Car Park Safety: Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.



We welcome into the family of the Church
James Kevin Madzonga
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! 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@.

Bible Alive for September is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church.

Office: The office is un-womaned until Monday 4th September. If you need something urgently, please speak to Fr. Andrew. *Caryll*

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration.

Tots @ St Gregory's: We start again on Tuesday 12th September at 9:30.

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: Enrolment for 2024 will be Sunday 8th Oct. after the 11am Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered & their parents at the 11am Mass on Sunday 5th Nov. All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates and times will be available at the registration. Please see the separate article on the way the programme works.

Confirmation in 2023: Confirmation sessions will resume in September, and those enrolled will be receiving an email with details.

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

Alpha in the Autumn: The sessions will start in September, and will be an 'on-line' course through Zoom. However, so that those on the course can meet face-to-face, there will be a welcome session the week before the official start, on Tuesday 12th September in the Hall at 7.00 pm. Please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha and the zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session. For any who live far away, we are sorry if you are unable to get to the 'face-to-face' session on 12th September, please do not let this put you off joining the course.

Parish Finances: At the end of the first quarter of the financial year (April to June) our finances have been fairly stable – we have had a small surplus of £317.35. 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)**

The Feast of St Gregory and the Anniversary of our Consecration

The 3rd of September is our Parish Feast, and Sunday 3rd is celebrated as the Feast of the Anniversary of the Consecration. The feast of St Gregory will be celebrated on Friday 1st with Mass in the evening at 7.00 pm, followed by refreshments in the hall. Contributions of food for the party will be welcomed! Please note the date, and come!

URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES

If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

Choir Notes: Our next choir practice will be on the first Saturday of October: 07/10/24. We will start at 11:00 am and go on till 12:15. November practices will focus on Christmas. *Alec*

Dog lovers wanted! Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Church, from 10am-12pm.

Electrical Hazards: We have recently had our statutory fixed wiring test, which was overdue thanks to the pandemic. The good news is that there were no serious deficiencies, but a number of repairs are needed to be done and in a few areas where the regulations have changed some up-dating is required to achieve compliance with the latest standards. While doing this it seems sensible to update the lighting to the latest LED lamps which will significantly reduce our electricity consumption and therefore our carbon footprint, particularly in the winter. The lights in the side aisles and at Our Lady's shrine have already been changed. The plan is to change the lights in the nave before the clocks change in October. The circuit breakers for the hall lights are now obsolete, and must be changed; this is work in hand. Part of safeguarding is to ensure that in every respect the church is as safe as possible for all who come here.

Fire Safety – Important notice. We have had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burn 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 happened recently, and must not continue.

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

Mission Prayer

Heavenly Father
it is your will that we should make disciples of all nations.
We ask you to bless the mission of our Diocese of Northampton and guide our hearts and minds so that your will might be done and your kingdom be build up here on earth.
We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, without which our work is in vain, and we entrust ourselves to your beloved Son, for we know that he is with us for all time, now and for ever.
Amen.

Prayer 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