



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

Synod Conversations

There were five questions in the synod conversations and these were intended as starters for discussion. Most of the meetings went on for a good time which suggests that there was plenty to say.

One response which came from several meetings was a feeling of gratitude that the Church is listening to the people. We all must remember that the Church is global, and what may be our own opinion, or even the opinion of a majority in this country may not be shared in other parts of the world. We must also remember that the Church is not a democratic organisation, and that truth is revealed by God in Jesus Christ, and the Church does not have the authority to change the Word of God.

So one may ask: ‘what will come of this?’ There are three levels at which results will be seen. The first, and most important is at a local level. It will impact on the parish in a number of ways. It will affirm the parish in what we are doing well, but also challenge us in what we are not doing so well, or could do better. Such issues will need to be addressed in the coming weeks and months. There are a number of issues where it is clear that the teaching of the Church has not been communicated in a way that is understood, and such matters will also need to be addressed; thought will have to be given as to how best to do this.

There are some issues that will be considered at a Diocesan or national level, and others that will end up as part of the final Synod of Bishops in the Vatican in 2023.

There is not space in the newsletter to include all the responses that were received; they will be available to see on the web-site after they have been submitted to the diocese. However, what follows is a summary of the main points raised.

What does it mean to you to be Catholic?

Many people spoke of the sense of family, both in the local congregation, as part of the global Church, and with the Saints in heaven. The benefits of the Sacraments in living a holy life and following God’s plan; the power of the Holy Spirit in guiding us and God’s grace and forgiveness. Some spoke of a sense of pride about the charitable works of the Church here and in other parts of the world, although there was also mention of shame in regard to recent scandals.

What are your experiences of the church doing something well?

There were many and various responses; locally, that the church is open every day, the opportunity to pray and come to Mass every day, and particular mention of daily Rosary and the provision of the 40 Hours adoration every year, of the care of the sick and

housebound. We are seen as a welcoming Church, and offering good music and inspiring liturgy; the provision of refreshments after some Masses was also appreciated. Some of the other points mentioned were the inspirational quality of our Sacramental preparation, the Alpha course programme, Children’s liturgy, our support of the Hope Centre and the toiletries that we give through the Cathedral, the small communities programme and the additional Sunday Mass during the pandemic. Beyond the parish, Pope Francis was particularly praised, Catholic schools and our stand for life and social justice were also recognised as being good works of the Church.

What are your experiences when things have not gone so well?

There was a variety of matters raised here, many of them personal and historical, and some conflicting with matters listed in the previous paragraph. While some thought we were a welcoming church, others said that we do not welcome newcomers very well. Behind many of the complaints is a common theme that the Church does not explain well enough the way it works, particularly in relation to marriage and nullity, and rules over the Sacraments. These will all have to be addressed at length and in the appropriate way.

What are your dreams for the Church?

Many of these were related to wider issues that just within the parish, for example, pro-life, justice and peace, protection of children from the dangers in social media and from trends in social behaviour which run counter to traditional Christian teaching. Many dream of a Church which is more outward-looking, clearly sharing the dream of Pope Francis, and many supporting the dream of a parish this is truly missionary. The way in which that is best fulfilled is not always entirely clear; some wish for more Masses, but without more priests, that is not possible.

How do you feel about the Alpha programme?

There was only one response which was critical of the programme, those who had experience of Alpha were supportive and spoke of their own appreciation of it. There were some who had not been on an Alpha and were uncertain about it, but the general mood seems to be that it is recognised as a good way of evangelising and deepening the faith and commitment of those who attend.

Conclusion

This is not a complete report on the Synod responses, but the full results will be forwarded to the Diocese, and within the parish local issues will also be considered.

Notices of Interest

Congratulations to Leo Bell: Please remember in your prayers Leo Bell who today celebrates his 90th birthday. A parishioner for over 50 years, he was the first head teacher of our Parish School, and later became head teacher of St. David's Middle School where he was equally well respected. He was, until relatively recently, a familiar presence in St. Gregory's Church, particularly at the 9.00 Mass, where he was a Reader and Eucharistic Minister for many years. We send him our sincere thanks for his devoted service, and our best wishes and love on this special occasion.

The Big Sleepout! Siobhan and Lorna will be collecting Sponsorship money after all Masses this weekend. Anyone who wanted to sponsor using the Just Giving page, the details are:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/siobhanbigssleepout2022>
<http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lorna-heron1> Thank you all for your continuous support and generosity. Siobhan & Lorna

The Crucifix facing the road: You may have noticed that this has been taken down; it was a victim of Eunice! We hope it will be repaired and replaced very soon.

Bible Alive for Lent 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 small supply of St. Patrick's Day cards. 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*

A Free Lunch? There is no such thing, but there will be a free dinner on Tuesday evening, March 8th at 7.30 pm. There really is no catch, except that if you enjoy the evening, you may like to become involved in the Alpha programme. If you don't, no problem! Please email to stgregoryalpha@gmail.com to reserve your place.

Next Alpha Dates: See opposite for full dates and subjects of the evenings.

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)**

Parish and Diocesan Finances: We have been asked to draw up a budget for the coming year and submit it to the Diocese. This has been done, and we are hoping for an increase in giving as more people come back to Mass week by week. If this materialises, we forecast a very small surplus. 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.

Prayers for Ukraine: The invasion of Ukraine by Russia last week has already cost the lives of many, and threatens the peace of much of Europe. There will be a prayer for peace and for the victims of war included in Mass each day. Please use this prayer yourself.

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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Next date to be in the Sacristy on Monday 4th April, 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2022: There will be six 'in-person' sessions preparing for first Reconciliation, both at Sacred Heart church, Weston Favell from 3.00 pm until 5.00 pm on Saturdays, 4th and 11th December before the Christmas break. Those preparing on-line will receive emails with what they need. After Christmas there will be sessions on January 15th, 22nd and 29th and on February 5th.

Confirmation in 2022: Confirmation classes will start soon. Confirmation will take place on Saturday 2nd July. Registration will open 13th March for two weeks. The course will commence thereafter.

Gregory Care update on toiletry donations: Thank you to everyone who has donated toiletries and hygiene products to the Cathedral Food Store. The need continues and we are always grateful for basic items. We anticipate the need will increase and thanks to your support we have capacity to provide provisions to individual or families in need. So if you are aware of anyone who would benefit from this please get in contact with Gregory Care through Fr Andrew. Recently Revolution Zero have opened a community food larder (social supermarket) in the former UCR Church, The Headlands. Their aim is to make food accessible to everyone and reduce the amount of food going to landfill. 15 items of choice for £5. Please take a look at the link-<http://www.revolutionzero.org/> They have a Facebook page and are open:- Tues 1-3pm Wed 1-4pm Thur 1-3pm and Sat 11-12 noon.

Thank you again for amazing contributions and please keep this initiative in your prayers.

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

Choir Matters Change: by popular demand, our next practice will be after the 7.00 pm Mass on Ash Wed (Mar 2) and will see the launch of our Holy Week & Easter programme; this date replaces Mar 4. After that it is business as usual: Fridays 1:45 - 3 pm: Mar 11, 18, 25, Apr 1 & 8. We are now blessed with a strong contingent of men singers but we need more ladies to keep the men in check & to replace others who have become unwell or simply had enough of me. *Alec*

Courses for Readers: The Bible Timeline course continues on Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. Last week we studied the time of the Maccabees and the changes in political control of the Holy Land in the years leading up to the birth of Jesus. Next week we will be studying the first nine chapters of St Luke's Gospel which takes us up to the Transfiguration of Jesus, a turning-point of the Gospel narrative, as from then on he journeys towards Jerusalem, his passion, death and resurrection. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

Hold the Date! There will be a Seder (Passover) meal in the hall on Tuesday April 5th starting at 7.00 pm. This is a wonderful way of growing in understanding of the Mass. More details soon.

Pivotal Players: This is a series of videos by Bishop Robert Barron showing the life of various people who have had a lasting impact on the life of the Church down the ages. All being well, this week we will look at St John Henry Newman, the 19th century English convert from the Church of England and later a Cardinal. He founded the Birmingham Oratory, and was an extremely important theological thinker who was looked on with suspicion in his lifetime by some, but was foundational in the thinking of Pope Benedict XVI who beatified him, and his writings inspired much of the texts of the Second Vatican Council. Please email Fr Andrew for the Zoom links.

Scripture Readings 27th February 2022, 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

The Wisdom book called Ecclesiasticus or Sirach was written in Hebrew about 200 BC by Ben Sira, a Jewish sage, and later translated into Greek. It was not translated into Latin by Jerome, but the Greek version was accepted as canonical by the early Church, and there are many allusions to it in the new Testament. At a time of increasing pagan Greek influence, Ben Sira showed that Israel's religion was still a firm basis for moral living. He gives many practical examples, helping Christians of every age to apply moral truths to their own times. Today's reading reminds us not to judge a person before hearing them speak.

The Psalm extols God's justice: crime may appear to be rewarded but wrong-doers will be punished in eternity.

Paul concludes his teaching to the Corinthians on the resurrection of the body with these triumphant words from Isaiah and Hosea: "Death is swallowed up in victory"; "Death, where is your sting?" After death our mortal nature puts on immortality. We must therefore never give up hope, confident in the victory God gives us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Luke's gospel Jesus ends his sermon on the plain, which included the beatitudes, by reminding us how our actions and words reflect what is in our hearts.

Psalm Response: **It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.**

(Sirach 27:4-7; Psalm 91(92); 1 Cor 15:54-58; Luke 6:39-45)

Chris Oliver

A way to say 'Thank you'

An Invitation to all who volunteer in the Parish

The parish could not function without the help of many, many volunteers who help in a vast number of different ways. Some are very obvious and can be seen; but others are 'behind the scenes' and less visible. We have been going through a tough time in many different ways, and this is a way of saying 'thank you'. On Friday March 18th there will be a dinner in the hall, to which all volunteers for the parish are invited. There is no charge – this is not a fund-raising occasion, no raffle, no collection plate, just an occasion for the parish to say thank you to all who give so generously. The only condition is that you RSVP to this invitation by email to Helen at helentme00@hotmail.com so that we know the numbers and can cater adequately. It will be a proper meal (don't eat first), but being a Friday, will not involve meat.

Of your charity:

Please pray for the soul of
Barry Kirby and of Sarah Timlin
who have died recently. May they rest in peace

A Weekend Journey to Emmaus

(Milton Keynes): Saturday 12th – Sunday
13th March 2022 (£35)

A heart warming journey with Jesus as he explains the Scriptures.

The road to Emmaus must be walked by all who wish to evangelise, since our hearts must be burning with the fire of the Word, in order to touch others with our words. 'Emmaus' will:

- Deepen your appreciation of the Scriptures.
- Enable you to experience the power of the Word of God.
- Take you on a journey through the Old Testament and show how it is fulfilled in Jesus.
- Give you a burning desire to return from 'Emmaus' to 'Jerusalem' to announce your encounter with the Risen Lord.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/a-weekend-journey-to-emmaus-march-2022/>

James: Discerning God's Will

The course will take place over seven Wednesday evenings on Zoom, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm on: 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March, 6th, 20th, 27th April 2022. (£5)

The Letter of James is full of inspiration and practical wisdom which enables believers to discover and discern the way God calls them to live each day. Everyone who wants to share their faith with others needs to grow in their ability to hear God clearly.

Taking part in 'James' will:

- Deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Letter of St. James.
- Help you to learn how to discern your daily life in the light of the Word of God.
- Deepen your ability to hear and recognise the voice of the Lord.
- Provide principles for approaching the art of discernment.

To book please go to:

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/james-discerning-gods-will/>

Volunteers needed; but not until the weather is better!

A good team of painters and labourers needs to be assembled to repaint the side aisles. Each could be done inside a week with sufficient helpers.

There will be an appeal for volunteers, including some who are willing to work on the top of the scaffold tower.

In order to plan this, if anyone is willing to help, either as painter, labourer or tea-person, please can you contact Cliff Snelling at cliff.snelling@btinternet.com, indicating available weeks.

When we know which weeks are likely to have the most number of keen volunteers, we will decide when to swing into action.

St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which will 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

First session:	April 26 th 2022:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	May 3 rd 2022:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	May 10 th 2022:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 17 th 2022:	How can I be sure of my faith?
Fifth Session:	May 24 th 2022:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	June 7 th 2022:	How does God guide us?
Seventh Session:	June 14 th 2022:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Away-Day:	June 16 th – 17 th 2022:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 21 st 2022:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 28 th 2022:	Why and how should we tell others?
Tenth Session:	July 5 th 2022:	What about the Church?
Eleventh Session:	July 12 th 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’.

DIocese of Northampton Liturgy Commission- LITURGICAL FORMATION

The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word



A Series of online Zoom Sessions exploring the upcoming Lectionary Readings and Seasons of the Liturgical Year. A valuable opportunity to develop our engagement with the Scriptures that we hear proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word at Mass.

Led by the Liturgical Formation Team with presentations by Liz Clark, Fr Allan Jones CRIC, Mgr Kevin McGinnell & Fr Andrew Behrens

Wednesday 23 February 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for Lent

Wednesday 6 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Preparing for the Triduum

Wednesday 20 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)

Celebrating Eastertide

Each session will include input, prayer and the opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Cost: No charge but there will be the opportunity to make a donation

Please register in advance to secure a place by e mail or phone: email admin@nores.org.uk or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1)

Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions. Thank you.

(Photo from www.pexels.com)

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen

*It's a huge undertaking,
but the Synod is getting
underway in our diocese.*

Synod 2021-23

- How we will manage our conversations in the parish will be announced soon. Pope Francis is clear that the voices of the loud and powerful and those with an axe to grind or a bee in their bonnet should not drown out the voice of the quiet and the marginalised.

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!

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