



# 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

## No more training for war

The prophesy of Isaiah which is read as the first reading for this Sunday is one for which we still wait the fulfilment. It reminds us that this season of Advent is one of waiting and preparation for two events: one of which we celebrate on 25<sup>th</sup> December every year; the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The other is that time when he will come again; a time which is yet to come.

Daily news reminds us in horrific manner that we have not yet reached the time when nation does not lift up sword against nation, and the prophet makes the plea: “come, let us walk in the light of the Lord”. (*Isaiah 2:5*)

The prophesy is very clear and explicit: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths”. (*Isaiah 2:3*)

In Isaiah’s day, the Temple was understood as the dwelling-place of God, but Jesus widens this concept. “The hour is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain (Samaria) nor in Jerusalem...true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth” (*John 4:21-23*)

In AD 70 the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed as Jesus had prophesied (*see Luke 21:6*) and St Paul makes it clear where the Temple is to be found in the Christian era: “Do you not know that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit”. (*1 Corinthians 6:19*)

When Isaiah speaks of people going to the ‘Temple of the Lord’, we can properly understand it as going to places of worship as we know them today — that is, to churches, we can also understand it as meaning going to us, as Christian people. Which raises the obvious question: am I recognisable as a Christian person?

Jesus gives us a number of indicators by which we may be recognised as Christian; perhaps the most obvious is to be found in the Gospel of John where Jesus says: “Everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another”. (*John 13:35*)

The Beatitudes offer a further set of indicators of Christian life: we can ask ourselves the question: “Am I poor in spirit?” This speaks of humility and not standing in judgement over others, not finding fault

but rather praising the good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has a section on the Beatitudes:

“The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life.”

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church §1717*)

We can examine our conscience in the light of each of the beatitudes, and seek the help of God through the Holy Spirit to be more closely conformed to the pattern which Jesus gives us.

Mourning does not simply refer to those in bereavement, although they are not forgotten. Rather it should be seen in the light of the Gospel: “As Jesus drew near the city, he wept over it and said: ‘if you had only recognised the things that make for peace’”. (*Luke 19:41-42*) We should be mourning over the world, but remembering that the mourning of Jesus led to action on his part. The mourning of Jesus is here clearly linked to the need for peace, and this takes us to another of the beatitudes and asks: “Am I a peacemaker?” Being a peacemaker is an active calling and speaks of a way of being, diffusing tensions rather than inflaming them and bringing calm rather than turbulence.

The other beatitudes all speak of other characteristics which should be hall-marks of all Christians. However the last of them warns us that we are likely to have to endure persecution and have lies spread about us. Following Christ means not following the popular culture of the world. It means challenging the secular ambitions and aims which are so often the cause of conflict and war, the cause of poverty and migration. But the response to today’s psalm: “I rejoiced when they said to me; let us go to the house of the Lord” speaks to us of how we can be agents of Christ’s peace.

At a time when there is war in Europe, as individuals we feel powerless to prevent the fighting. Of course we pray for a just end to the war, but by spreading the Gospel of Peace, we can make a difference – albeit only a small one. Many small differences can add up to a really big one!

## The Year of Matthew begins today

We read the Gospels on Sunday over a three-year cycle. Starting this Sunday, we are in the year of Matthew. In the Sundays which are not in the Advent-Christmas or the Lent-Easter seasons, it is from Matthew that the Sunday Gospels are drawn. This Gospel tells the story of Jesus from a Jewish perspective. It can be seen as dividing into five sections, echoing the five books of the Torah (the first five

books of the Old Testament), and makes frequent references to the prophets of the Old Testament. Today, when Jesus tells us to ‘stand ready’, he draws a parallel from the Old Testament of the coming of the flood in Noah’s day.

It is planned that there will be a Zoom Bible Study evening on Matthew in January.



# Notices of Interest

**Bible Alive** for November 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 – Catholic Diaries for 2023 are now available, as are Christmas cards and mementos! 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*

**Christmas Cards:** With the very high cost of postage, you are welcome to leave Christmas Cards for people who attend St Gregory's Church on the table at the back of church. However, **PLEASE** do not just write the Christian name on the envelope!

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration:** As a trial, Holy Hour will be Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This can only continue if there are sufficient numbers to sustain it. No one is expected to remain for the entire two hours, come for as long as you can or want to.

**Advent Retreat 1:** Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, St Gregory's Church, 3.00 pm – 6.00 pm; given by Fr Rajan Fausto (Evangelist from Rome): "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the Glory of the Lord rises upon you. All welcome.

**Advent Retreat 2:** Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, St Gregory's Church. Mass at 9am & ends at 4pm. Please bring packed lunch. "The New & Perpetual Pentecost, the coming era of peace. A new springtime for the Church". Derek Williams, catholic lay evangelist, will give a retreat on the gift of living in the Divine Will, a new dawn for the Church. All are welcome.

**Flowers for Christmas:** The usual envelopes for donations for Christmas flowers will be available from this week

**Safe Haven** is starting a Monday Coffee Morning group at Great Houghton Village Hall for the Afghan ladies who are living in Northampton, The Holiday Inn. We would appreciate some volunteers to assist on a rota basis. If interested please contact Aileen Fogarty. [Firstaid.k@btinternet.com](mailto:Firstaid.k@btinternet.com) Tel 01604630546

**Food Parcels:** Please contact Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

**Save the Date: Saturday 18th March 2023** Encounter Northampton, a day hosted by Mission Northampton in St Gregory's Hall from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. More details later!

**Church Heating:** The Church heating has to be on for two hours before it even begins to warm up, so not running it for weekday Mass is a way of making a considerable saving. Please come in warm clothing! We will heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

**The God who Speaks:** The 'Year of the Word' continues and the Diocesan Bible Study sessions for the Sunday Mass readings are continuing. There will be a session on 'Preparing for Advent and Christmas' on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and in January there will be an introduction to the Year of Matthew (Year A in the lectionary)

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 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: Important Dates for First Communion Families:** 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 are asked to meet Helen after the 9.00 Mass next Sunday.

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

**In honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** there will be 24 hours Exposition at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Adoration will start after 10.30 Mass on Wed. 7th Dec. and will conclude with 9.30am Mass Thurs. If you can commit to an hour please phone Gillian 07724337202 or just come along. Thank you.

**Missio Donors/ Red Box holders:** Calendars for 2023 are free & will be available for collection at church early Dec, possibly this week. New supporters of Missio to help spread the missionary work of the Church always welcome. For further information speak to the clergy or Dorothy (9:00 Mass) or Alec (11:00 Mass).

**Choir Matters:** Weekly practices for Christmas etc will continue to be after 11am Sunday Mass till 1pm at the latest. We have almost done as much as we can in the circumstances. This week's session could be the last until next year. *Alec*

**A course on the Psalms:** It is sub-titled "The School of Prayer", with the invitation to 'learn to pray like Christ'. Continues.

**Memorial Mass: On Sat. 17<sup>th</sup> December, 11am,** there will be a Celebratory Mass for Philip Ndekwe RIP. All welcome.

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** We have re-started: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!!

**St Gregory's Brownies:** St Gregory's has a Brownie Unit, who meet in the hall on Wednesday evenings. We have some spaces due to some of our girls going up to Guides and would love to meet some new prospective Brownies. We are all aged between 7 and 10 years, and please get in touch with the leaders on [tw.lewis@ntlworld.com](mailto:tw.lewis@ntlworld.com) for more information or a little chat.

**Flame 2023:** The theme of Flame 2023 – which is exactly 150 days before World Youth Day in Lisbon – takes the WYD Scripture "Mary arose and went with haste" and crystallises it into the theme, "Rise Up!" Rise up after the pandemic, Rise up as young Catholics, Rise up – as Mary did – for the surprising and beautiful adventure that is our Catholic faith. **Sat 4<sup>th</sup> March 23 - book the date - more details soon**

**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)**

**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 1st December 2019, 1st Sunday of Advent, Year A

During advent the first readings are from first Isaiah, mostly composed before 700 BC, a period when Israel was under attack from Assyria. Isaiah is critical of attempts by Israel's kings to control their destiny – he urges them to place their faith and trust in God, and in His promises to David. But God might use Israel's enemies to cleanse his people.

Nevertheless the people will survive through a remnant, like a stump of a tree, from which will come an ideal ruler in the future. In today's reading Isaiah looks forward to a peaceful time when all nations will be attracted by Israel's behaviour to accept God's authority, centred on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

The Psalm celebrates arriving in Jerusalem, goal of pilgrims and seat of government.

In his letter to the Romans Paul has been drawing out the implications of his image of Christians as all parts of one body. Since we are therefore dependant on each other we have a duty of love for each other. Judgement will come at any time, so we must live at all times as if all our actions are visible to all.

In Matthew's gospel, speaking on Mount Olivet just before the Last Supper, Jesus reinforces the need to "stay awake", ready for the Lord's coming.

Psalm Response: **I rejoiced when I heard them say:  
Let us go to God's house".**

(Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 121(122); Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44)

*Chris Oliver*

*Chris Oliver has been contributing these notes to us for the last seven years while he has been living in Northampton.*

*He has now removed to Shropshire, and has retired from producing them, but allows us to continue to print them.*

*We thank him for his work here, and pray for him and his wife Marina in their new home. May God give them health and happiness.*

## Thanks to the Alpha Team

Alpha does not just happen! There is a considerable team behind the running of Alpha. There is the catering team who on Monday scour the shops for best value food to be prepared for the meal. There are always two courses, a main and a dessert. On Tuesday afternoon the food is prepared in the hall kitchen.

The second team come in on Tuesday afternoon and prepare the hall, setting the tables and decorating them and making it ready.

The technical team come in to set up the video and projector, and the table leaders come in, first to pray together, and then to remind themselves of the theme of the session.

The table host team are there to welcome everyone who comes, and make sure that all is completely ready.

The last team to arrive is the washing up team; all are invited to share in the meal, and by and large, everyone enjoys their share in the evening. If you think you could be in one of the teams next time, please contact Daniel Davighi.

<b>First session:</b>	<b>September 20<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Is there more to life than this?
<b>Second Session:</b>	<b>September 27<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Who is Jesus?
<b>Third Session:</b>	<b>October 4<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Why did Jesus die?
<b>Fourth Session:</b>	<b>October 11<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	How can I have faith?
<b>Fifth Session:</b>	<b>October 18<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Why and how do I pray?
<b>Sixth Session:</b>	<b>October 25<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Why and how should I read the Bible?
<b>Seventh Session:</b>	<b>November 8<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	How does God guide us?
<b>Away-Day:</b>	<b>November 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do? How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? How can I make the most if the rest of my life?
<b>Eighth Session:</b>	<b>November 15<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	How can I resist evil?
<b>Ninth Session:</b>	<b>November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022:</b>	Why and how should I tell others?
<b>Tenth Session:</b>	<b>November 29<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	Does God heal today?
<b>Eleventh Session:</b>	<b>December 6<sup>th</sup> 2022:</b>	What about the Church?

# The Spirit of Christmas Present

## CAFOD World Gifts

World Gifts are a range of virtual charity gifts that will delight the people you give them to and help transform the lives of families living in poverty. Ranging in price from under £10 to £4,000, you can buy a queen bee for £4, or a vegetable garden for £5; for £10 you can teach someone to read.

<https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

## Cathedral Foodstore

Christmas Gift cards are available, priced at either £5 or £10, suitable gifts for those for whom you cannot think what to buy. The money helps to buy food for the Cathedral Foodstore, the card is your gift.

Cards can be bought after Sunday Mass or from the parish office on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays

## Gregory Care Toiletries

Your gifts of toiletries to Gregory Care are an important part of the support given by the Cathedral Foodstore to needy families. Thank you for your continued generosity

## Caritas 'Love Christmas'

Caritas Northampton are collecting toys, books, games, puzzles, chocolates to luxury biscuits, slippers, socks, gloves and scarves, perfumes and aftershaves, makeup and jewellery, colouring books and baby gifts which are distributed throughout the diocese as Christmas gifts to needy families.

<https://northamptondiocese.org/lovechristmas/>

## Hope Centre Food

Continued thanks for your regular generosity to the Hope Centre. From this Sunday and until the end of Christmastide your donations for refreshments in the hall are given to the Hope Centre, along with the offerings at the crib