



# 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

## All Saints' Eve

The popular secular narrative is that 'Hallowe'en' is really a pagan festival, Samhain, and was Christianised by the Church, while remaining fundamentally pagan.

This fits in with the contemporary mindset, seeking to undermine Christian thinking. It is important for us to understand what is the Church's belief and teaching, and what in secular culture should be treated with caution or avoided.

First, to consider how secular and pagan celebrations were 'Christianised'. This certainly happened, and it is helpful to see the history of this.

Two of the main Jewish feasts in the 1<sup>st</sup> century; Passover, which for the Christian community was the time of the Resurrection, and became the first Christian feast-day and Pentecost, as the day when the Holy Spirit came on the Apostles were celebrated, and the days between were known as the 'Great Fifty Days'. Both were always celebrated on a Sunday, and the weekly celebration of the 'Easter of the Week' was the fundamental Christian celebration. A season of preparation for Easter was soon established culminating with Good Friday.

The Church first came to being in the days of the Roman Empire, and the Church was totally opposed to Christians participating in the celebration of false 'gods'. However, as Christian leaders were being martyred, and the stories of their heroic deaths were remembered, so too were the anniversaries of their 'heavenly birthdays'. St Polycarp is the first of whom we have documentary evidence, in 156 AD, but by the third century it was usual to remember and celebrate martyrs on the day of their death.

By the fourth century a feast was being celebrated in honour of all the saints collectively, usually in the springtime, and the seventh century, long after the Roman Empire had collapsed the old Pantheon of Rome was turned into a Christian church dedicated to Our Lady and all the Martyrs. The dedication took place on the ancient feast of Lemuria, the Roman feast of the dead, celebrated in the spring. By that time the old Roman celebrations were no longer significant, but the choice of the day and the Christianising of a pagan temple was making a clear statement.

At about the same time St Boniface was evangelising in Germany, and a particular community were venerating a huge oak tree dedicated to the pagan 'god' Thor. Part of their worship involved a human sacrifice of a child. Boniface taught them about Jesus and the oak was chopped down. In its place, he spoke to them about a fir tree, which is tall and straight, pointing to heaven. It is ever-green and speaks of eternal life. Thus grew up the tradition of the Christmas tree, popular in Germany and brought to England in the nineteenth century by Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria.

What is important to notice is that the heart of the story is not the Christianising of a tree but rather the message of the Gospel.

Paganism is not a single form of belief, and in spite of modern terminology, not a single religion. The word 'pagan' actually means 'villager', or someone who does not live in a town or city; who is from the countryside. In Christian terms it refers to anyone who is not Christian, whatever they may believe. There are many different non-Christian (pagan) beliefs about death and what happens after death, but the Christian belief and hope in heaven and eternal life in Jesus Christ is in contrast with all the pagan belief systems.

The fundamental message of the Church is the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus has conquered death, that we have nothing to fear about death (even though we may fear the process of dying). All celebrations are secondary to the fundamental celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. Any celebration which is not centred on the Resurrection of Jesus cannot be thought to be Christian. That is why part of any personal or community significant occasion is the celebration of Mass, which is, above all, celebrating the risen life of Jesus, sacramentally present in the Eucharist.

Modern secular 'hallowe'en' clearly does not meet this criterion. Does that make it pagan? It is harmful? These are big questions, but it is clear that although hanging on the feast of All Saints, it has no place in Christian life although some of the customs sprung, not from the pagan Samhain, but from a genuine Christian faith in action.

The tradition of children knocking on doors goes back to mediaeval times when small loaves of bread, not unlike hot-cross buns were baked and given in return for the children's prayers for those who had died. Some say that this is the origin of 'trick or treat'. Perhaps a way of re-Christianising this activity might be to pray with anyone who knocks expecting a sweet. (Let them have the sweet if they will pray with you!) This custom was known as 'souling'.

As they went, they lit their way with lanterns placed in hollowed-out turnips, known as 'soul lights', and these were often put on the graves of relatives. Modern 'grave-candles' derive from this.

Another tradition is that of children dressing up in costumes as saints, and this is becoming more popular today, although the retail outlets have not yet realised this. That is probably a good thing, as families can together assemble costumes out of what they have rather than giving their money in the supermarkets!

There will be just such a celebration, entitled 'Holyween' on Thursday evening. This is a celebration for everyone (not just children) starting at 5.00 pm. This will be a thoroughly Christian celebration — not Ghoulies and Ghosties and Long-leggity beasties and things that go bump in the night!



# Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Eliza Popescu  
who received Christian Baptism recently.  
Please pray for her and her family.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. 2025 diaries now available. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

**The New Three Year Missals:** I have ordered more than the original 20 so there should be enough for everyone. The price will be £19.95. *Please be aware that although you can buy Missals cheaper online, they are NOT the new translation!*

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

**CAFOD & the Disasters Emergency Committee Middle East Humanitarian Appeal:** There will be an emergency appeal for the Holy Land Disaster Fund on Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, which is also remembrance Sunday, a day when we already remember the tragic loss caused by war. We pray for a lasting peace between the different nations of the area, and offer support to the victims of the present conflicts.

**Choir Notes:** Next Practices are 11-12 on Saturdays: Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> 30<sup>th</sup>, Dec 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Alec

**Choir Notes Extra!** - I will normally select the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, 11am-12pm. Preparation for Easter, Feast of St Gregory, Preparation for Christmas disrupt that plan. Individual dates I would like, therefore, are: Feb 8; Mar 8, 15, 22, 29; Apr 5, 12; Jun 14; Jul 12; Aug 9, 30; Oct 11; Nov 8, 15, 22, 29; Dec 6, 13. Alec

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 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 2024/5:** First Holy Communion 2025 Only 3 weeks to go for our information & registration session. If you've got a child in year 3 or up to year 9 make sure you have it in your diary! Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October after 11am Mass in the hall. If there is a problem the same meeting will be held at Sacred Heart Church after 10:30 Mass on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**Confirmation in 2025:** January 5<sup>th</sup> after the 9am Mass is the enrolment date for the next Confirmation. The Confirmation will be on Sunday afternoon, September 7<sup>th</sup> 2025, exact time to be decided.

**Thank you for your donations to last week's World Mission Sunday appeal.** Your prayers and support will help missionaries work alongside communities worldwide, regardless of background or belief. Please continue to pray for all who share the love and hope of Christ with our sisters and brothers in need throughout the world. To support mission year-round, visit [mission.org.uk](http://mission.org.uk) or call 020 7821 9755 (office hours) or take part in the Red Box (etc) system in use in our parish. After Mass, speak to Dot (09:00) or Alec (11:00). He can be contacted on 01604 622513 or at [a.unsworth@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.unsworth@ntlworld.com).

**Parish Requiem 2024:** The annual Requiem Mass for all those whose funerals have taken place since last November, and including others for whom prayers have been asked will be on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00 pm. Please note the date.

**You Can Help Your Marriage** – Are you frustrated or angry with your spouse? Do you argue, or have you stopped talking all together? Retrouvaille helps married couples through difficult times. Register now for next programme starting 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. Call 07887296983 or Email: [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com)

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – 30<sup>th</sup> November**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

**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)**

**Ceili Dancing** is ongoing in the Church Hall every Wednesday evening, 7.30-8.45pm. Everyone welcome to join our friendly group. To find out more phone Pat on 07710624921, or just turn up!

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10.00 am-12.00 pm.

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** If you have the care of a baby or pre-school child on Tuesday mornings join us in the church hall. From 9.30-11.30 - charge just £1 for you & any number of children. This includes snacks for the children & yourself - excellent value for money! We run throughout term time. Looking forward to seeing you!

**Abortion- Section 9 Public Order Act 2023-Buffer zones:**  
On 31<sup>st</sup> Oct Section 9 of the Public Order Act 2023 will become law, making vigils outside abortion centres a criminal offence. This will probably include silent prayer. It effectively takes away that last line of defence for women & their unborn babies. Please write to your local MP letting them know that you disapprove of this law & want it repealed. You can find a handy tool on the SPUC website in order to do this. Why not join SPUC & help us make abortion unthinkable. Please contact William Currie on [wpcurie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurie@btinternet.com) or send a text to 07393965643.

## 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
<b>After harvest until the beginning of Advent: The Bible Society</b>	

### Gregory Care

Please contact Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel, or is in material need.

Delayed new/nearly new clothes sale plus toys and household goods. Keep looking; new date to be confirmed. In aid of The Cathedral Foodstore.

### Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land

Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war:  
**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 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Jeremiah has promised that Israel will return from their exile in Babylon. This new exodus will be on a smooth path with ample water, not like the first wanderings in the desert. God has redeemed his people, and will make a new unbreakable covenant with Israel, writing his law on people's hearts, instead of on breakable stone. Jesus made this new covenant at the Last Supper.

The Psalm exults in the imagined joy of this restoration, so intense as to seem like dream.

The extended extract from Hebrews read over the last 2 weeks, concludes by showing how Christ's humanity enables him to understand our weaknesses. As the high priest forever, appointed by God at his baptism, Christ is therefore supremely fitted to mediate between us and God. But Hebrews goes on to say that Christ had to learn the depths of the human condition through his suffering.

Today we hear the last of Jesus' teachings during his journey up to Jerusalem. Though blind, Bartimeus calls Jesus "Son of David". He can see who Jesus is more clearly than the disciples following Jesus. He then calls Jesus "Master", the only person in the first three gospels to do so before the resurrection. Able to see, Bartimeus now follows as a disciple.

Psalm Response: **What great deeds the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.**

(Jeremiah 31: 7-9; Psalm 125(126); Hebrews 5: 1-6; Mark 10: 46-52)

Chris Oliver

## Alpha on holiday this week — Dates and Subjects

Seventh Session	November 5th	How does God guide us?	Alpha is a basic introduction to faith in God, in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It is not a complete teaching scheme for the entire Christian faith. Bishop Barron's 'Catholicism' course is for those who have completed Alpha.
Eighth Session	November 12th	Does God heal today?	
Alpha Away-Day	November 16 <sup>th</sup> (Saturday)	Who is The Holy Spirit?	
Ninth Session	November 19th	How can I resist evil?	
Tenth Session	November 26th	Why and how should I tell others?	
Eleventh Session	December 3rd	What about the Church?	

We need to recruit more helpers; if you are able to help in any way, please contact Daniel Davighi or speak to Fr Andrew. For more information and to book please see: <https://stgregory.org.uk/alpha>

## HOLYWEEN CELEBRATION

A hearty welcome for all parishioners for Holyween celebrations at St Gregory's Church on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October 5pm.

There will be Holy Mass at 7:00pm and adoration to follow.

Come dressed up as saints for an evening filled with fun, faith and fellowship.

For more information please see the notice board or contact Anto: 07412542068 or Rose: 07768708619

## Preparing for the New Lectionary

Speaker Mgr Kevin McGinnell on Wednesday 6th November at 7.30pm.

This talk will be held online via Zoom. Please use the link below to register your interest, and you will be sent a join-up message for the session beforehand.

<https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/the-new-lectionary/>

There is no charge for attending these talks, but there will be an opportunity to make a donation for the work of the Diocesan Liturgical Formation Team, if you would like to.

## Chutney for CAFOD

There will be more chutney available for purchase on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025, just 5 weeks before Easter. Many thanks to Julie and Andrew Dexter for their generosity and skill. The recipe is one handed down the generations, and is much appreciated.

### The Venerable Ignatius Spencer CP



*Loving Father, your servant,  
Ignatius Spencer  
spent his entire life preaching the love  
shown for us  
in the Passion of Your Son,  
and working tirelessly  
to bring the people of this country  
to know that love. Help us to follow his  
example,  
and show us that you are well pleased  
with his life,  
by granting the favour we now ask  
through his intercession,  
In particular, at this time we pray  
for your blessing on the mission of the  
Church in Northampton.*

*Mary, Mother of Holy Hope,  
Pray for us. Amen.*

## Parents with children who will start school next year

### St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School Open Day:

There will be one last open day for you to look around the school for the new intake in September 2025. This is 6<sup>th</sup> November between 10.00 am and 12 noon. No appointment necessary, just come and have a chat and see this wonderful school! Alternatively, you can contact the office to arrange a personal tour with the Head of School. Evening appointments available. 01604 403511. We look forward to meeting you!