



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

Pastoral Message from Bishop David

Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency Baseline Audit Report

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Following months of preparation, a substantive baseline audit of safeguarding across our diocese by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency took place in November 2023. This was a planned audit in line with recommendations presented in the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, ICCSA published in 2020.

Creating and developing a culture of safeguarding and protection of the vulnerable within our church is the responsibility of each of us. It requires every member of our diocesan family to be vigilant, to take time to know our procedures and to pray that all within our places of worship will uphold the dignity of all God's children.

I am pleased to share with you that we received a grade of 'comprehensive assurance' in six of the eight standards with one more being rated as 'exemplary' and the last graded as 'firm progress'. Our overall grading was rated as 'comprehensive assurance'. There is a great deal to be encouraged by as we strive to embed safeguarding practices in our everyday mission.

To this end, I wish to thank you all. The audit has affirmed our commitment to safeguarding, it has recognised the dedication of many people engaged in this valuable ministry and given clear indication of the recommended areas of improvement.

Having said this, we must not get complacent. We should all continue to place those who have suffered in our Church at the heart of our response to abuse. As I read the report, I was reassured that the audit team had reflected that we have a "survivor-led approach" to safeguarding which "involves a wide range of Diocesan individuals, from leadership to volunteers".

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few of the individuals and groups of people who work tirelessly in this area. Every parish in our diocese has at least one Parish Safeguarding Representative. As volunteers the parish representatives give up a considerable amount of time, sharing the messages of safeguarding, implementing diocesan and national policies and procedures, and promoting good and safe practice within the local area. We are blessed by their dedication and sensitivity as they often are the 'first responders' to concerns.

Our diocesan trustees and safeguarding advisory board offer oversight and governance of our safeguarding practices. The report highlights that the "diocese has good oversight of key safeguarding

risks, current and future", which reassures me as Bishop of this diocese. I know how much time is put in by these two groups, mainly volunteers as they scrutinise and offer reflection on all the work of the safeguarding team. I would particularly like to thank the two chairs of these committees, Mr Hugh Williams and Canon Brendan Killeen. Their diligent work means that all casework and practices are governed in a "robust and effective" manner.

Our diocesan safeguarding team are second to none. The report highlights that the "Diocese has maximised its modest clergy and lay resources to deliver effective safeguarding practice". Danielle Dixon, our diocesan safeguarding coordinator and Laura Lester, the safeguarding support officer, have developed a professional environment which firmly roots safeguarding within the mission of our Church.

I wish to take a moment to reassure you all that we will continue to evaluate and reflect upon the resources available for safeguarding in our diocese. As a Church, we rely heavily on the generosity of volunteers and as well as my thanks to all those currently engaged in this vital effort, I would like to encourage anyone wishing to volunteer to have an informal conversation with a member of our team.

I am encouraged by the positive way in which we place the most vulnerable at the heart of our mission and I am grateful to Deacon Peter Collins and his team who make up the Healing and Reconciliation Group. This group seek ways to proactively reach out to victims and survivors of abuse in small ways which can increase our understanding of the impact of abuse and develop resources which can help an individual in their journey towards healing. The report refers to this work as "inspirational and innovative" which we should all be proud of.

As we continually seek to improve our safeguarding services, again, I would like to encourage each of you. Safeguarding in the diocese of Northampton is not a departmental responsibility but a culture which relies on every member of our parish and diocesan communities playing their part. This report highlights the good practice across all eight national standards and the positivity of the report is a reflection of the culture created by each of you.

Bishop David Oakley

Bishop of Northampton

Notices of Interest

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Cards and items for First Communion and Confirmation are available. Red Communion ties are here & cost £6. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

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

Coming Events (for your diary):

Saturday 27th April: Pro-Life Life Chain on St Peters Way, 11.00 – 1.00
Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*
Friday 19th to Saturday 20th July: 40 Hours Adoration at St Gregory's

This Thursday the hall will be closed all day as it is being used as a polling station for the election of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. Previously the local polling station was at Cedar Road Primary School, but this meant the school had to close for the day. While democratic control of the police is clearly appropriate, the involvement of party politics into policing is more doubtful, and the election should be for the person most able to fulfil the requirements of the task than the party they support.

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)**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 27th May 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 2023/4: All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

Confirmation in 2024: There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk for further information.

Next Alpha will be after Easter:

First session:	April 16th:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	April 23rd:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	April 30th:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 7th:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	May 14th:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 21st:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	June 4th:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	June 8th:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 11th:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 18th:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 25th:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	July 2nd:	What about the Church?

Tots @ St Gregory's: St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

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: 10am-12 pm.

The National Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors takes place on Tuesday 30th April 2024. There will be a second collection on the following weekend, the sixth Sunday of Easter with proceeds going to the healing garden at our Cathedral.

Diocesan Music Day Sat. 11th May 11am-3.30pm, Thomas Beckett School. For Singers & Choirs – see poster for full details.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (next – 25th May), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

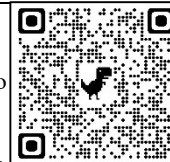
Choir Notes: next practice is Saturday 4 May, 11:00-12:30. There are vacancies for new members, especially ladies. *Alec*

Fire Safety: Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on the trays under the places for candles and candles must not be stacked one on top of another.

Care for our environment: Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1st to October 4th, and this has now become a celebration shared by other Christians as well. Within our own local area, it would be good if Christians could work together to try to bring about a greater understanding and respect for God's creation. Issues like clean air, fly-tipping and care of the green spaces (Abington Park, Eastfield Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Vale Park, Wilson's Orchard, Billing Road Cemetery). If anyone is interested in these, or other environmental issues, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration, 19th/20th July: There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7am on Friday 19th July until 11pm on Saturday 20th July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration.

Wool for Stella Maris Woolly Hats Thank you so much everyone for your generosity to the Stella Maris Seafarers Charity! It seems like a week doesn't go by where a bag of wool or woolly hats hasn't been left in the sacristy. One Chaplain recently told me that "Giving them woolly hats not only helps keep them warm, it reminds them that someone is thinking of them." God Bless and again Thank you! Bob <https://stellamaris.org.uk/>



Diocesan Pilgrimages: There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8th June (leaving 8am sharp), and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23rd Aug to Friday 30th Aug. Booking details for both will follow shortly.

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



For Sale

Small plaques of the church, gift-boxed, artist hand-made, a limited number available in the repository. £5 for Gregory Care.

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

Sunday 28th April: 5th Sunday of Eastertide, Year B

Much has happened in Acts since last Sunday's reading: Peter and some apostles have been imprisoned and beaten before being set free again. Seven Greeks were appointed to look after the Hellenists – apparently Greek-speaking Christians. Stephen was arrested and his speech to the Jewish leaders suggests that the Hellenists were persecuted by the Jews because they did not join in the Temple worship. They were driven out to Judea and Samaria – and so the Gospel began to spread.

Today we hear how Paul returns from his conversion near Damascus. He is accepted by the Hebrew Christians, but not by the Hellenists, so has to be hustled out of town.

The ending of this Messianic Psalm, uttered by Our Lord on the Cross, rejoices in the triumph of God's justice: God's promises to Israel are fulfilled in Jesus.

In his first Letter John insists that we must show our faith by our actions: keeping God's commandments. We can be sure we are doing right if we obey our conscience guided by God's Spirit dwelling in us.

In John's gospel Jesus gives his disciples detailed teaching at the last supper, just before his arrest. We must be bound closely to Christ: He is the vine, we are the branches, gaining sustenance and support from him.

Psalm Response:

**You, Lord, are my praise
in the great assembly.**

(Acts 9: 26-31 ; Ps 21(22) ; 1 John 3: 18-24 ; John 15: 1-8)

Chris Oliver

A View of Rome

Fr Andrew writes:

Palazzola lies in the Alban Hills just south of Rome, and with a view over the city. On a clear day the dome of St Peter's Basilica is visible, although there is frequently a heat-haze which hides it. On this visit there has been a shortage of heat, so that the view over Rome has been clearer than usual.

The house belongs to the English College, which was established in 1579 to train Catholic priests for the mission in England and Wales after the separation of England from the Catholic Church.

Many of the first priests trained in Rome died a martyr's death; St Philip Neri who lived opposite the college used to greet them as 'martyr flowers'.

However Palazzola is much older than that; it dates from the 1st or 2nd century before Christ, when slaves cut out the rock face from the side of Monte Cavo, an extinct volcano. The city of Rome stood on the seven hills, but the valleys in between were inhospitable, and in the summer the whole of Rome was uncomfortable and the richest of the people made for the hills. The Alban Hills were the Beverley Hills of Rome! However the Roman Empire collapsed, and the villa build on this site fell into disuse.

Not far from the villa was a hermitage where a handful of Christians lived, and at some point they moved into the ruins of the villa. In due course it became established as a religious house in its own right, and remained occupied by a succession of communities until 1914. At that time Portuguese Franciscans lived there, but following a revolution in their home country, the house was sold to a doctor who ran it as a health clinic, but in 1918 the pandemic of 'Spanish Flu' took its toll, and it was put up for sale.

Many countries had (and have) seminaries in Rome, and because transport was difficult, the students would stay for most of their formation in Rome. English students went home only once in their seven years of training. The colleges had houses outside the city to use in the summer, and at the time (1918) the house used by the English College was too small, and in 1920 Palazzola became their villa. One of the first things the students did was to dig out a

swimming pool – this has since been enlarged, and remains a favourite for summer visitors!

By the 1970s transport between England and Italy became easier, and the need for a summer residence declined; many colleges sold their villas, but Palazzola remained, and has become a holiday, retreat and conference venue; used by the college, but also available to visitors, and retaining the religious atmosphere.

There is normally a priest in residence, and I am delighted to be able to fulfil that duty, normally twice a year.

This year there have been two school parties from Catholic schools in England here, a business meeting, several family groups and a number of individual visitors, coming from a variety of countries as well as from England; from Ireland, Scotland, The United States, Canada and Scandinavia as well as a group of Italians. There is also a small number of English-speaking people who live in the area who come to the Sunday Mass.

The surrounding area is interesting; the house overlooks lake Albano, and opposite is the town of Castel Gandolfo, where Popes before Francis have spent their summers, but now the Papal Palace is a museum and the gardens are open to the public and both are beautiful and historic. Each year I try to do something I have never done before, and in a previous year I had seen a sign to a 'Bosco dei Capuccini', but not found it. This had become an objective for this year, and achieved! One delight in the wood was hearing the song of the hoopoe, and extraordinary bird I had never seen before, another was finding a former Capuchin convent, now occupied by a community of Nigerian nuns. In their church there is a painting showing Palazzola in 1618.

The nearest town is Rocca di Papa, where the main church is staffed by priests from India – so much here reminded me of Northampton! It has been a good break here, and I plan to be here again: in October, but can also highly recommend it as a holiday or short break venue. There are pictures and more information on their website:

www.palazzola.net