



# 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

# Saints of Many Races



### Saint Augustine of Hippo

St Augustine of Hippo was a theologian, philosopher, the bishop of Hippo Regius in Numidia, Roman North Africa in AD 354-430.



### Saint Augustine Zhao Rong

St Augustine Zhao Rong was a Catholic priest and martyr who preached the gospel in the western Sichuan Province of China in the early 18th century.



### Saint Charbel

Saint Charbel was a Maronite Catholic priest, monk, and hermit who lived in 19th Century Lebanon and was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1965.



### Saint Kizito

Kizito was beatified by Pope Benedict XV in 1920 and canonised by Pope Paul VI on 18 October 1964. He is the patron saint of children and primary schools.



### Saint Matthew Avariga

Saint Matthew Ayariga was martyred for his faith by Islamic State militants alongside 20 Coptic Orthodox construction workers on a beach in Libya in 2015



### Blessed Michael Iwene Tansi

Blessed Michael Cyprian Iwene Tansi was born in September 1903 in Igboezunu Aguleri, a village in south-eastern Nigeria in the present day Anambra State



### Saint Oscar Romero

Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador and a champion of diversity and social justice in the 20th Century.



### Saint Josephine Bakhita

Saint Josephine Bakhita was the first black woman to be canonised in the modern era. She had been a victim of trafficking and ‘modern slavery’.

Men and women of historic virtue have walked the path to sainthood for centuries, inspiring us to look to their example and pray to them to take our petitions to the Lord. However, when you look at the prayer cards and icons for sale in our parish shops and kiosks, you could be forgiven for thinking that all our saints are white Europeans.

This, of course, only reveals a segment of the bigger picture, and there are many saints of colour in the Catholic Church who have inspired the faithful in their devotions.

Jesus called his followers to proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation (*Mark 16:15*), and salvation is for every nation, race people and tongue. (*Apocalypse 7:9*)

# 17 Days until Ash Wednesday!

Easter falls quite early this year; Ash Wednesday is on 14<sup>th</sup> February. The day before is Shrove Tuesday (‘Mardi Gras’), a day for ‘Carnival’ (literally, ‘good bye to meat’ before Lent), probably a more suitable day for ‘Valentines’ celebrations: pancakes and red roses!

### Friday Stations of the Cross

16 <sup>th</sup> February	St Gregory’s
23 <sup>rd</sup> February	St Matthew’s
1 <sup>st</sup> March	St Gregory’s
8 <sup>th</sup> March	St Matthew’s
15 <sup>th</sup> March	St Gregory’s
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	St Matthew’s

Among the Lent activities, there will be Station of the Cross, shared with St Matthew’s on Friday evenings at 7.30.

There will also be Stations of the Cross each Sunday at 2.30 pm in St Gregory’s.

There will be other Lent resources, particularly on prayer which will be announced soon.

**PLEASE NOTE CORRECTED DATES**



# Notices of Interest

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. We still need more helpers especially after 9am Mass. I want to express a huge thank you to the loyal band who make the whole enterprise possible! Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

**Hope Centre: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Big Sleepout!** Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. @ Northampton College, Lower Mounts Campus. Siobhan O'Donovan & Lorna Heron will be sleeping out again this year to raise much needed money for the homeless. There are sponsorship forms at both doors if you wish to sponsor them. They also have a fundraising page if you wish to donate online – just ask for details! Thanking you all in advance for your support and generosity. *Siobhan and Lorna*

**Bible Alive** for Lent is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church. December is now sold out! There are, however, several small booklets of Walk with Me available for Advent. Please see the table in the Narthex.

**Diocesan Bible Study:** Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 7.30 pm, by Zoom on the Scripture Readings for the Sundays of Lent. The link will be sent to those who have previously attended, others are asked to email to Fr Andrew who will send it to you.

**Mission Northampton:** Weekly Zoom course entitled "Secrets of Paul", lasting 10 weeks on Wednesdays starting 10<sup>th</sup> Jan and running until 20<sup>th</sup> Mar (with a break for half-term on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb). There is a charge of £10 for the course - visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/> to register.

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next - Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Feb**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

**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 Hall, from 10am-12 pm.

**As we prepare for the Jubilee year** in 2025 as 'Pilgrims of Hope' you are invited to join our diocese on pilgrimage. There are plenty to choose from including the Shrines of Northern France in Oct. 24, Lourdes in Aug. 24, Walsingham in June 24 and Rome and Assisi in 2025. For more information on all of these pilgrimages and our diocesan walking pilgrimage, 'The Way of Our Lady of Guadalupe' visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/pilgrimage/>

**Light up Lent (29<sup>th</sup> Feb - 7<sup>th</sup> March)** is our diocesan Week of Accompanied Prayer, a retreat in everyday life. Begin or deepen your prayer life, get to know the Scriptures better, & above all, grow in faith & love for the Lord who loves you. With one-to-one support each day for a week, via Zoom, from an experienced prayer guide. Find out more here & at our introductory webinar on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 7:30-8:30pm. <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/event/lightuplent/>

**Help protect unborn babies-SPUC:** With attempts to decriminalise abortion in the UK & the Democratic Party in America making access to abortion a major election issue, attacks on unborn babies have never been as numerous or pernicious. Now is a vital time for pro-lifers to fight for the rights of unborn children & as Catholics we have a moral duty to act in this regard. Please consider joining a pro-life organisation such as the SPUC. SPUC is the oldest pro-life organisation in the world & does invaluable work in Parliament & education & offers support for women suffering from post-abortion trauma. YOU are being called to help us make abortion unthinkable. For more details contact William Currie on [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com) or 07393965643 (text)

**Choir Notes:** the next practice will be Saturday morning 11-12:30 on Feb 3. *Alec*

**The Secrets of St Paul:** A 10 week course on Zoom run by Mission Northampton, starting on Wednesday 10th January 2024 and running until Wednesday 27th March 2024, 7.30-9.00 pm. (Break for Ash Wednesday & half term: Wednesday 14th & 21st February). Book at: <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online>

**Donorbox:** St. Gregory's has now signed up with Donorbox to enable people to make donations to the Church via a QR code .This is a safe & easy way of making a one-off donation without having to have cash on you!

If you have a smartphone, just point your camera at the QR code, click the link & the site will see you through the donation process. There is a larger version of this QR code in the Narthex area and in the hall for refreshment donations!



**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. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Sacristy.

**Cathedral Foodstore:** Our continued thanks to all who donate to the toiletries for the Foodstore. Please remember that the Foodstore is open to everyone who may be experiencing hardship. Food can be purchased at substantially reduced prices (as it now operates as a food larder) All that is required is a form of ID and a genuine reason for needing to use the larder. It operates between 10:15 - 12:15 every Thursday in the St Thomas Centre (behind the Cathedral).

**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!!

**Fire Safety — Important notice.** 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.

**Bookings are open** for Lux 2024. For school years 7 to 13. Our theme this year is Dive. See the website for more information and to book: <https://nymo.org/lux-dive/>. If you have any questions then please email [info@nymo.org](mailto:info@nymo.org).

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 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:** 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](mailto:childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk) for further information.

## Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:  
From the first Sunday in Advent The Hope Centre  
to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:

<b>From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:</b>	<b>Gregory Care</b>
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

**Household Support Fund:** West Northants Council have received further funding from Dept. of Work & Pensions to support eligible residents until 31 Mar 24. Support available for West Northants residents earning less than £450 per week. Anyone who is eligible should visit <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/claiming-benefits/household-support-fund>

## 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 28<sup>th</sup> January: The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year, Year B

The fifth and final book of Pentateuch, Deuteronomy brings up to date the earlier Law books, and seeks to persuade Israel that their only salvation is to obey God's Law. Today's reading, promising that the Lord will raise up a Prophet like Moses, was seen by Jesus and his followers as pointing to Jesus.

The Psalm invites us to worship God, who is our king and our shepherd, warning us to be more faithful than the Israelites in the desert.

In last week's reading Paul emphasised to the Corinthians that the world is passing away and they should stop arguing among themselves. They should consider carefully before giving themselves extra worries by more responsibilities. Hence the advice this week for unmarried people to remain in their present state so

they can give all their time to the Lord's affairs. But Paul goes on to make it clear he is not against marriage.

After the calling of the first disciples, Mark's Gospel continues with Jesus teaching in the synagogue. His teaching and healing authority is immediately recognised. But spirits recognise Jesus so he tells them to be quiet. Their words can have no meaning to human beings during his lifetime. Mark insists that we can only know Jesus through the Cross.

Psalm Response: **O that today you would listen to his voice! "Harden not your hearts".**

(Deut 18: 15-20; Psalm 94(95): 1-2.6-9; 1 Cor 7: 32-35; Mark 1: 21-28)

*Chris Oliver*

## The Prayer of the Psalms *(Pope Francis)*

As we read the Bible, we continually come across prayers of various types. But we also find a book made up solely of prayers, a book that has become the native land, gymnasium and home of countless men and women of prayer. It is the Book of Psalms.

There are 150 Psalms to pray. The Catechism affirms that every Psalm "possesses such direct simplicity that it can be prayed in truth by men of all times and conditions" (§2588). As we read and reread the Psalms, we learn the language of prayer.

God the Father, indeed, with his Spirit, inspired them in the heart of King David and others who prayed, in order to teach every man and woman how to praise him, how to thank him and supplicate him; how to invoke him in joy and in suffering, and how to recount the wonders of his works and of his Law. In short, the Psalms are the Word of God that we human beings use to speak with him.

In the Psalms we hear the voices of men and women of prayer in flesh and blood, whose life, like that of us all, is fraught with problems, hardships and uncertainties. The Psalmist does not radically contest this suffering: he knows that it is part of living.

In the Psalms suffering is transformed into a question. And among the many questions, there is one that remains suspended, like an incessant cry that runs throughout the entire book from beginning to end. A question that we repeat many times: "Until when, Lord? Until when?" Every suffering calls for liberation, every tear calls for consolation, every wound awaits healing, every slander a sentence of absolution. "Until when, Lord, will I have to suffer this? Listen to me, Lord!" How many times we have prayed like this, with "Until when?", enough now, Lord!

By constantly asking such questions, the Psalms teach us not to get used to pain, and remind us that life is not saved unless it is healed. The existence of each human being is but a breath, his or her story is fleeting, but the prayerful know that they are precious in the eyes of God, and so it makes sense to cry out.

And this is important. When we pray, we do so because we know we are precious in God's eyes. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that, from within, inspires in us this awareness: of being precious in the eyes of God. And this is why we are moved to pray.

"My" tears and "my" pain drive me to go ahead in prayer. They are "my" tears, that no one has ever shed before me. Yes, many have wept, many. But "my" tears are mine, "My" pain is my own, "my" suffering is my own.

When we want to console somebody, we cannot find the words. Why? Because we cannot arrive at his or her pain, because "their" suffering is "their" own, his tears are his own. The same is true of us: the tears, "my" suffering is mine, the tears are "mine", the tears are mine, and with these tears, with this suffering I turn to the Lord. Before God we are not strangers, or numbers. We are faces and hearts, known one by one, by name.

In the Psalms, the believer finds an answer. He knows that even if all human doors were barred, God's door is open. Even if the whole world had issued a verdict of condemnation, there is salvation in God.

"The Lord listens": sometimes in prayer it is enough to know this. Problems are not always solved. Those who pray are not deluded: they know that many questions of life down here remain unresolved, with no way out; suffering will accompany us and, after one battle, others will await us. But if we are listened to, everything becomes more bearable.

I will tell you something: it is good for me, in difficult moments, to think of Jesus weeping; when He wept looking at Jerusalem, when He wept before Lazarus' tomb. God has wept for me, God weeps, He weeps over our suffering. To think that Jesus weeps with me in suffering is a consolation: it helps us to keep going.

Take courage, persevere in prayer. Jesus is always by our side.

Our next RE:NEW Northampton morning will be on Saturday 3rd February 2024 at the usual time of 10am to 12 noon at the St Thomas Cathedral Centre, Northampton. You will be very welcome.

Our speaker will be Bernie Garfitt. Bernie will be sharing from her own life about the power of prayer, witnessing to answered prayers by herself and others. God's Word assures us saying "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (*Philippians 4:6*). Bernie has a powerful story about experiencing the Lord answering prayer. It will be an uplifting morning with worship, friendship and the usual pastries and coffee. Please feel free to invite your friends. We also hope to have a separate session for children so feel free to invite families as well. Following this RE:NEW the next one on Saturday 2nd March 2024 will feature Margaret & Barry Mizen sharing their inspirational story about forgiveness following the murder of their son Jimmy .

[www.mizenfoundation.org/margaret-and-barry/](http://www.mizenfoundation.org/margaret-and-barry/)



"Many of you that come to the 11am Mass will have seen Bert the large yellow Labrador sitting at the end of one of the pews and in the hall afterwards. Bert is in training to be an assistance dog for Canine Partners ([caninepartners.org.uk](http://caninepartners.org.uk)) and moves to advance training known as doggy university on 29th January therefore the last time he will be at Mass is 28th January. As his puppy parents Peter and I would like to thank everyone for their understanding and acceptance. If anyone would like to know more about canine partners and their work please feel free to talk to us."

*Diane and Peter Phillips*