



# 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

## This is Holy Week — Hinge of the Year

Over the last weeks we have been following Pope Francis in the teaching that he has been giving each week at the Papal Audiences, but this week; the most sacred and important week for the Church, we will take a break from the important theme of evangelisation. When we return to this subject we shall be following Pope Francis' sequence again, looking at St Paul, one of the first evangelists.

At the time of writing this, Pope Francis is in hospital with a respiratory infection, and we hold him in prayer for a speedy recovery.

This is Holy Week, and we walk with Jesus through the week. In the Gospel accounts of what took place in the first days of this week, St John tells us very little (*John 12:20-50*). On the other hand the 'synoptic' Gospels record some of the greatest teaching of Jesus as being during this time. Matthew (*Matthew 21:12 – 26:16*), Mark (*Mark 11:12 – 14:11*) and Luke (*Luke 19:41 – 22:6*) all offer much fuller accounts of what took place after the triumphal entry of Jesus on Palm Sunday until the beginning of the Last Supper on Thursday evening.

The three Gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke are called 'synoptic' (meaning 'through the same eye') because their accounts are similar — in many cases word-for-word identical. John, writing many years later tells the story in a more reflective way.

In the narrative that takes us through the first part of Holy Week in the synoptic Gospels, we find that mostly we are hearing the same events recorded in each Gospel, although there are small differences. Matthew is the fullest account, and during these three days, those chapters would make sensible reading.

### **The Temple is cleansed**

When we read of the 'Temple', we need to remember that we are 'temples of the Holy Spirit' (*1 Corinthians 6:19*), and that Holy Week is a good time for us to let Jesus cleanse us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is specific opportunity in the Penitential Liturgies on Monday and Tuesday evenings (Monday at the Cathedral, Tuesday at St Gregory's, both at 7.00 pm).

### **The Fig Tree is cursed**

The fig tree which is bearing no fruit is cursed. While Jesus uses this story to emphasise the power of prayer, we should remember that we are called upon to bear fruit. (*see Galatians 5:22-26*) In preparing ourselves for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we might well ask ourselves if we are bearing the right sort of fruit.

### **Jesus' authority is questioned**

The next part of the account is taken up with the chief priests, the Pharisees and the Sadducees questioning Jesus. Moses told the people of Israel that on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month (Nisan) they were to choose a lamb without blemish, and on 14<sup>th</sup> it was to be sacrificed. This was the first Passover. (*Exodus 12:1-6*) What is happening in this part of the narrative is that Jesus is being checked over by the priests, by the Pharisees and by the Sadducees to see if they can find fault with him, just as in the Temple the lambs for the Passover sacrifice were being checked out to make sure that there was nothing wrong with them. They cannot get the better of Jesus in their questioning; he is without blemish.

### **Three parables**

The parables of the two sons, the wicked tenants and the wedding banquet each have a related message: that the son who actually **does** the will of the Father is preferred of the son who says he will but doesn't, that the tenant who fails to fulfil the requirements of his tenancy in the end will have to pay the price of his failure and that the people who reject their invitation to the Son's wedding-feast do not get a second chance. All three are aimed at those who have responsibility in the established religion of Judaism at the time.

### **Four questions**

The Pharisees and the Sadducees continue to check Jesus with questions about paying taxes, about the resurrection, about the greatest commandment and finally about the Messiah. Jesus passes all these tests, such that "no one dare ask him any more questions" (*Matthew 22:46*) He is indeed the lamb without blemish; the Lamb of God.

### **Jesus speaks to the crowds**

Those who were inspecting Jesus go away, and Jesus then speaks to the crowds of ordinary people; he speaks to us, and the instruction given in chapter 23 is good for us all to read, particularly as we prepare ourselves for the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter.

### **Jesus speaks to his Disciples**

Leaving the Temple, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives with his disciples, and he warns them that the road ahead will be rough. This is followed by a passage about the end of the world, and warning us to beware of false prophets (*Matthew 24:24-28*) saying that the end is come or is near. We are warned to be watchful and ready all the time, because it will come at an unexpected hour. (*Matthew 24:44*)

### **Three more parables**

The three parables of chapter 25 are addressed to disciples, and the first, that of the ten bridesmaids re-iterates the call to be ready. We do not know when the bridegroom (Jesus) will come again, but we must be ready. We can put off the moment when we seek forgiveness and reconciliation, but there is a risk that we might end up like the foolish bridesmaids. We are warned! In the parable of the talents we are encouraged to make use of the gifts we are given in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven. There are many talents which can be used in the service of the Church; talents which enhance our worship, talents which maintain our buildings, talents which help in evangelisation and the proclamation of the Gospel and others which support the life of the Church in many ways. However, the third of the parables makes us open our arms much wider and recognise that talents must be used for the needy in so many ways, the needs of the hungry and thirsty, of the homeless and the destitute, the needs of the sick, the needs of the migrant and the needs of the prisoner. The Kingdom of Heaven is wider than the Church!

The parable of the judgement of the nations concludes this part of the Gospel, and leads us to the preparation for the Last Supper and so takes us to Maundy Thursday and into what the Church calls the "Triduum"; the 'Three Holy Days' of Thursday, Friday and Saturday which end with the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord at Easter.



# Notices of Interest

**Car Park Safety:** Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! Easter Cards and Easter Mass Bouquet Cards. We also 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](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com). PS: There are still some Diaries available.

**Big Clean:** Church cleaning will take place on Tuesday after Mass & Rosary – Volunteers are needed & very welcome!

**Easter Flowers:** We will be arranging the Easter flowers at 10am on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April. Volunteers needed and very welcome!

**Grief to Grace:** Grief to Grace is a specialised 5 day residential programme of spiritual & psychological healing for anyone who has suffered sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those who are the victims of rape, incest or abuse by a member of the clergy. For details please see [www.griegtograceuk.org](http://www.griegtograceuk.org), email [info@griegtograceuk.org](mailto:info@griegtograceuk.org), contact 02081542719 or see posters in the Narthex.

**The repair of the Crucifix outside the Church:** It was a year ago that the crucifix outside the Church was replaced after repairs were done, and a generous donation was given by members of the Indian community. This was more than the actual cost of the repair. Many thanks for the additional money given which had helped us through the rising costs of the year.

**Church Heating:** Weekday Mass is now back in the church but Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

**Thomas Becket Catholic School** have a number of job vacancies, please look on their website for details.

**Fire Safety – Important notice.** Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **MUST NOT** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be at 7pm, Mon. 24<sup>th</sup> April 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:** 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 should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

**Pro Life Chain:** On Sat. 29<sup>th</sup> April, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. This act of silent witness is to remember the millions of lives lost to abortion since the Abortion Act 1967. It will take place between 11am & 1pm. Please consider joining us at this important event. We will stand together to proclaim the pro-life message. Abortion is a tragedy for babies, Mothers, Fathers, and society as whole. We have a moral duty to speak out against the horror of abortion. If you can join us or want more information, please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com). Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

**Are You Interested in the Diaconate?** If so, there will be an information morning as follows: Sat. 13<sup>th</sup> May, 10am - 12.30pm, St. Mary's RC Church, 82 West Street, Dunstable, LU6 1NY. Entitled: 'Opportunity to find out more about the diaconate in our Diocese.' Please contact Fr. Tony on 01582 662710 for more details.

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

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration:** Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it.

**Food Parcels:** Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

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

**CAFOD Big Walk:** Kevin and Aideen thank all for their support. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March they have walked 160K together.

**Gregory Care** Thank you so much to those who donate toiletries for your great response this week. Some weeks our supplies are really low but then thanks to your generosity we can manage to give every family (now over 60) toiletries along with their food bag. Don't forget we have gift certificates for the Cathedral Food Store if you need a charity gift for Easter!

**Squires Mews Care Home, Kettering Road** are staging a Cutlery-Free Dining Experience on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1pm-3pm. Please see leaflets for full details.

**Choir notes:** Now that the warm weather is here (or should be), practices will resume after evening Mass 7:45-9pm: Thursdays 20 April, 18 May (Holy Day: The Ascension), 29 June (Holy Day: St Peter and St Paul), Tues. 15 August (Holy Day: The Assumption). New members always welcome especially ladies as, in recent times, we have "lost" four or five for one reason or another. *Alec*

**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)**

## Vacancy - St. Mary's & St. Gregory's Catholic Primary

**Schools: Lay Chaplain:** Permanent – Part Time 4 days/week (22.5 hours) 38 weeks/year + 5 training days. We wish to appoint a dedicated & highly motivated Lay Chaplain. Opportunity to work in a high quality, vibrant & caring environment where we share a rich vision for our pupils & for the communities in which we work.

Job description, candidate pack & application form available from [www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk](http://www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk) & downloading from the Trust website: [www.olicatschools.org](http://www.olicatschools.org). Email completed applications by 12pm Sun 16<sup>th</sup> April, to Executive Head Teacher, Mrs Yuen's office at [nduffy-pieterse@sg.nor.olicatschools.org](mailto:nduffy-pieterse@sg.nor.olicatschools.org). Interview date: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April.

**The Universe Catholic Weekly Online Newspaper:** In order to keep high standards going and maintain a strong weekly Catholic voice at a time when it is much needed in the world, please consider taking out a subscription. Order your Digital 2 weeks free introductory offer by emailing [michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk](mailto:michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk).

**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 5th April 2020, Palm/Passion Sunday Year A

In exile in Babylon, after Jerusalem was destroyed in 597 BC, the despairing people are tempted to give up their faith in God. In the 'servant-song' Isaiah offers consolation, recommending trust in the Lord.

Today Isaiah's words express both our horror at the way Our Lord was treated, and our admiration for his example of patient non-retaliation. Trusting confidently in his Father, he "sets his face like flint", even though it is covered with spittle.

On the Cross Jesus uttered the first words of this psalm which reflects his suffering. Not a cry of despair, but expressing Jesus' complete confidence in his Father and praising the redemption bought by his Cross.

The hymn in Philippians rejoices: unlike Adam, Jesus did not seek to be equal to God. But God raised him to glory and gave him the name 'Lord'. Jesus on the Cross invites us to imitate his humility.

Matthew's Passion, with its lively dialogue, shows Jesus aware and in control. Writing after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Matthew blamed the Jewish leaders for Jesus' death. Jesus died just before Passover, when Jews celebrated their freedom from slavery. Soldiers, Jewish leaders, the inscription on the Cross, all ironically give Jesus his true title of 'King of the Jews', the Messiah. Jesus' obedience to God's plan gives the Cross meaning.

Psalm Response:

**My God, my God,  
why have you forsaken me?**

(Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21(22); Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14 – 27:66)

*Chris Oliver*

## Alpha began on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2023

The third session asks the question: "Why did Jesus have to die?" Could God not have just forgiven us and made it all right? A simple answer is that yes, God could. The problem is that it was humans, not God who crucified Jesus. Since the earliest days of mankind there has been sin in the world, and to a greater or lesser extent, we are all sharers in that sin, whether in thought, word or deed. The crucifixion of Jesus brings the magnitude of that sin into sharp focus. A mere "That's OK" would have been totally inadequate for the seriousness of human sin. But such is the love of God that he gave his own son, an innocent victim, to pay the ultimate price. Just as "That's OK" is inadequate, God's love in Jesus requires more from us.

<b>First session:</b>	<b>March 14<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	Is there more to life than this?
<b>Second Session:</b>	<b>March 21<sup>st</sup> 2023:</b>	Who is Jesus?
<b>Third Session:</b>	<b>March 28<sup>th</sup> 2023</b>	Why did Jesus die?
<b>Fourth Session:</b>	<b>April 18<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	How can I have faith?
<b>Fifth Session:</b>	<b>April 25<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	Why and how do I pray?
<b>Sixth Session:</b>	<b>May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023:</b>	Why and how should I read the Bible?
<b>Seventh Session:</b>	<b>May 9<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	How does God guide us?
<b>Away-Day:</b>	<b>May 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> 2023</b>	Who is the Holy Spirit?
<b>Eighth Session:</b>	<b>May 16<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	How can I resist evil?
<b>Ninth Session:</b>	<b>May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023:</b>	Why and how should I tell others?
<b>Tenth Session:</b>	<b>June 6<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	Does God heal today?
<b>Eleventh Session:</b>	<b>June 13<sup>th</sup> 2023:</b>	What about the Church?

### Gregory Care

**UPDATE FOR CORONATION BIG LUNCH**  
Bank Holiday Monday 8th May 12 noon.

We hope everyone is getting on board with their crown making! Don't forget adults are included and we can't wait to see how creative you are! We are expecting some outrageous designs.

Our aim for this event is to bring people together as a community for a fun afternoon at little or no cost to individuals or the environment, with this in mind we would like to have a parade of 'crowns' made from only recycled materials (for both adults and children).



### Passover Meal

**Only a few places left!**

We have the opportunity to experience the Passover



Meal in a Christian context, and interpreted for us so that we can understand the significance of the particular symbols of the Jewish Seder Meal and through it, better understand the liturgy of Maundy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper

This will be on Wednesday in Holy Week, 5<sup>th</sup> April, starting at 6.45 pm.

There is a charge for adults of £12; children are free.

Tickets available now, please see Rayner Willnecker.

### Penitential Liturgies

As is usual before Easter and Christmas, there will be penitential liturgies; at the Cathedral on Monday evening in Holy Week and here at St Gregory's on Tuesday in Holy Week; both starting at 7.00 pm. Please make use of this.

### Easter Flowers

Donations for Easter flowers can be made using the envelopes which are in the narthex. Please bring them to the Sacristy; names of those in whose memory flowers are given will be in the newsletter for Easter Day

Any helpers available on Holy Saturday would be most welcome. (10.00 am – midday)

## Parents or Carers and Children — Maundy Thursday and Good Friday

There will be activities for parents / carers and children on Maundy Thursday morning and Good Friday morning, from 10.00 am until 12 noon, led by Helen Furniss. The evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and the watch is probably too late for very young children, and the Good Friday liturgy at 3.00 pm is not easy for them.

However, they are important days for us, and the activities in the mornings will help children to understand what these days commemorate, and what Easter eggs symbolise so that Easter is not just a chocolate-fest, but really celebrates the new life that Jesus gives us through his resurrection from the dead.