



# 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

## A Community of Communities

Last week we described the parish as a ‘Community of Communities’. This is not an original statement; it was used by Pope St John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation to the Church in America in January 1999. He wrote:

“One way of renewing parishes, especially urgent for parishes in large cities, might be to consider the parish as a community of communities and movements. It seems timely therefore to form ecclesial communities and groups of a size that allows for true human relationships. In such a human context, it will be easier to gather to hear the word of God, to reflect on the range of human problems in the light of this word, and gradually to make responsible decisions inspired by the all-embracing love of Christ. In this way, every parish, can promote nowadays a more person-centered evangelization and better cooperate with other social, educational and community work.”

*(Ecclesia in America, January 22 1999 §41)*

In the last couple of weeks two documents have come out quoting the same phrase. First, there is a new “Directory for Catechesis” from the Vatican which has a significant section of the work of parishes. It speaks of “a process of *missionary conversion* (which) must be begun that is not limited to maintaining the status quo or guaranteeing the administration of the sacraments, but presses forward in the direction of evangelisation” (§300).

The second document also comes from the Vatican, and was approved by Pope Francis on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It is entitled: “Instruction: *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church*”, and Bishop David has asked all the clergy to read it. Chapter 5 is actually headed as “A community of communities: A Parish that is inclusive, evangelising and attentive to the poor”. Although this arrived after last week’s newsletter had been written, it carries the same purpose.

Although over the past three weeks we considered three distinct tasks, they overlap, and, indeed can be seen as three aspects of the same task; that of being missionary disciples. The rebuilding of the community after our time of isolation; the returning to the study of the Scriptures and the re-population of the Church in justice and faithfulness to God are all clear aspects of missionary discipleship.

The first reading of today’s Mass begins with an invitation: “Oh, come”; and the invitation is to a meal: “you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy”. This is the invitation of the missionary parish and the missionary disciple. But what is on offer is not just a good meal and a good time; what God is saying is: “come to me, listen, and your soul will live.”

Today’s Gospel take up the theme of the meal with the story of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand.

In our readings today we see all three of our themes as we return from our exile. The people were asked to sit down on the grass; St Luke’s account of the same event gives us more detail (*Luke 9:10-17*). First, as well as the healing which Matthew mentions, Jesus also “spoke to them about the kingdom of God”. Isaiah has said: “listen”; Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God.

Luke also tells us that Jesus told them to “sit down in groups of about fifty each”. This is building community. In a crowd of five thousand it is hard to find community; in fifty it is possible. This is exactly what Pope St John Paul II is getting at when he speaks of “groups of a size that allows for true human relationships”.

Both Matthew and Luke tell of how Jesus “raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing”. Then he broke the bread. While bread and fish do not make a Mass, there can be no doubt that the first readers and hearers of this Gospel story would immediately think of the celebration of what they knew as “the breaking of bread”; what we call the Mass.

The return from exile of the Jewish people was spread over many years. We have no idea how long our return will take. Many are still shielding and many remain vulnerable. While we are ‘socially distanced’, we cannot behave as we would like; what the ‘new normal’ will be like remains a mystery, but a community built around Zoom, Messenger and Skype is not an inviting prospect in the long-term. It may be many months before any sort of social life can be restored.

These cannot just be months of inaction. As soon as the first exiles got back to Jerusalem they set about their tasks. During the summer holiday weeks there is not usually a great deal going on, but it is the time when preparations are being made for the coming school year. It is a time when the numbers at Mass tend to decline as people go away for holidays. However, we have been through a time when there has been no one at all physically at Mass, and people have been following Mass on line; some from St Gregory’s, some from the Cathedral, some from Walsingham, some from a variety of places in Ireland, and some who have been on global tours for Sunday Mass.

We have been able to keep in touch with some people, but, where telephone numbers are out of date or our data is incomplete, there almost a certainty that there will be people who have been totally isolated from the Church. We are using the ‘Track and Trace’ forms, where consent is given, to update our address list. We need to keep in touch with one another. This is very important.

While we hope that some of the restrictions will be lifted by September, there will still be those who are vulnerable, and we are preparing for using ‘Zoom’ for sessions of Bible Timeline courses.



# Notices of Interest

**Confession:** Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.

**The Office:** Now that the Church is finally allowed to open, I am happy to see people during office hours. However, I must ask you to stay at the office doorway so that social distancing can be maintained. Thank you. *Caryll*

**Bible Alive** for July & August is now available. The cost is £3.00. If you want to purchase a copy, they are near the hand-sanitiser in the narthex as you come into church. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

**For Parents and Teachers.** CAFOD have launched a National Assembly for schools. This amazing assembly can be used at home. It is all about CAFOD's 'Summer of Hope' and informs, inspires and encourages children, at a time when children may really need it. It is led by passionate youths and is a real must-watch! <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/Summer-hope-assembly>

**CAFOD Corona Virus online petition:** Out of love for our brothers & sisters please sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

**Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre:** Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:  
<https://cafod.org.uk/>  
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

**The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC),** of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

**Global Healing:** The Bishops' Conference have produced a film entitled "Global Healing", which can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/global-healing/global-healing-films/main-film/>.

It highlights the state of our planet & looks more closely at the Pope's encyclical letter on caring for our common home – Laudato si'.

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

**Vianney Mission Prayer Group** will not meet during this time.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** From 9.00 am to 12 noon on Thursdays, and then following Mass in the evening there will be Adoration until 8.30 pm.

**Tots @St Gregory's:** As with other meetings, Tots has been cancelled until further notice.

**Forthcoming Alpha Course:** The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21<sup>st</sup>. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 0799908997 before you attend to book your place.**

**First Holy Communion – 2020:** The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

**Confirmation – 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparation Session:** The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 20<sup>th</sup> November (Note change).

## Notice from the Diocese

**Online Donation:** The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

**Standing Order via Donor's Own Bank.** You can set up a standing order for donations to your parish using either your on line bank account or in branch. The information required to make the donation 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)**

**Holy Communion and face masks:** Last week instructions were given that the wearing of face masks was to become compulsory in churches; this has turned out to be inaccurate; but if you feel more comfortable wearing one, that is fine. However, you clearly cannot have your mouth covered while receiving Holy Communion! The Church's rule is that you consume the Host before you move away from the minister. Please remove your mask before being given the Host. Priest and Deacon wear face-coverings for your protection.

**Becoming a Catholic:** For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

## Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral  
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham  
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

EWTN  
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer  
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

# Scripture Readings 2nd August 2020, 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Second Isaiah encourages the Israelites exiled in Babylon by reminding them that God had not forgotten his everlasting covenant with them. They are still invited to turn to him and to enjoy the heavenly banquet in the end days. But they must "listen, and your soul will live".

The Psalm praises the Lord's care for creation: God – of his nature – must be "just in all his ways", but he is also "kind and full of compassion".

Paul has now arrived at the tremendous conclusion he has been working towards through these four chapters of his letter to the Romans: "nothing can come between us and the love of Christ". We have been justified by our faith in the gospel. God is on our side. Jesus himself prays on our behalf. We can be certain that, no matter

who we are, nor what we do, God never stops loving us. How difficult it can be to accept this! This is what God's covenant means: we will never cease to be his people.

The Gospel shows how readily God provides for our needs, just as he provided the manna in the desert. The feedings of the multitudes give us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to come. Foreshadowing the Eucharist, the disciples begin to take on some of Christ's work.

Psalm Response:

**You open wide your hand,  
O Lord; you grant our desires.**

(Is 55:1-3; Ps 144(145); Rom 8:35,37-39; Mt 14:13-21)

Chris Oliver

# The Season of Creation

**Tip No. 77:** ***Solidarity with the Poor:** Try making your own 3 ply facemask rather than using the medical ones, which are needed by the NHS.*

**Tip No. 74:** ***Solidarity with the Poor:** Source out FairTrade CLOTHING which is cool and comfortable to wear; benefits and respects People and the Planet, and supports fairtrade values.*

**Actions to LiveSimply :** Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype.

**Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew**

## The promise of a Rose Garden\*

### The Church Garden

#### Making the Church look more inviting and welcoming

We are very fortunate to have such a useful and pleasant asset in the form of the Church garden. I am sure all of us at some time will have been in the garden even if just for those few occasions when we use it as part of our worship. It really is quite a nice space and recently some work has been done to tidy and improve the garden and rockery. Some climbing and some floribunda roses have been planted against the south wall of the Church and more recently on the 8<sup>th</sup> May this year a Peace rose was planted to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of world war two in Europe. But it is more than just a garden, it is a place to spend some quiet time in prayer or meditation perhaps in the company of the statue of Our Lady or simply to enjoy the ambience. In the rockery, with a statue of the risen Christ atop, there is a representation of the tomb of Christ showing inside the tomb the cloths folded neatly. How many of us know that the inside of the tomb is illuminated at night?

There is another part of the garden many of us are perhaps less familiar with. This is the "front" or roadside garden of the Church and with the large Crucifix as the centrepiece can be seen by all passers-by. The foremost part of this is a rose bed which has been planted out over a number of years but sadly has not had the attention it needed and is looking rather sad, neglected and overgrown. The good news is that we have plans to makeover this garden to make the Church look a more inviting and welcoming place. Work has already started on clearing some of the overgrown shrubs and the rose bed

will be reinvigorated and replanted with new roses including one named after the co-patron of our Diocese, Saint Thomas Becket. An order for the new roses has been placed with a rose grower and they are expected to arrive by October/November. Where possible, the existing roses will be transplanted into a new rose bed to be dug in line with the Crucifix. Sadly not all of the existing roses are suitable for transplanting, however, there will be the opportunity for parishioners to plant a rose for a special occasion in the new rose bed. Now the even better news. The new roses will be donated to the Church, so what better way at the start of this work to show our appreciation than to do something to benefit those less fortunate than ourselves by way of a collection for CAFOD. But that's not all. The new roses will be planted in October/November and to mark that occasion we will hold another collection for CAFOD. But it doesn't end there. In the spring, around Easter time, when the roses are beginning to burst into new life we will hold another collection for, guess who, yes, CAFOD. And finally, in the summer when the roses are in full bloom let us complete the sequence by holding the by now familiar (and generous) collection for CAFOD.

Cliff Snelling

\* "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden" is the title of a book by Joanne Greenberg (under the pen-name of Hannah Green), published in 1964, and describes a teenaged girl suffering from schizophrenia, and was written to try to combat the stigmatisation which so often was (and still is) associated with mental illness. A song in the 1970s used these words, but with a different theme.

### Congratulations to (young) William Currie

William went on a sponsored fast to raise funds for SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children), and has so far raised £66,000! (The appeal was not just to St Gregory's; he was recently appointed as

the national fund-raising officer for SPUC, and has set himself a high standard for coming years!



**During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The August “Bible Alive” is now available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.**

