



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

Welcome to Thomas Becket

It is a great pleasure to welcome students from Thomas Becket Catholic School to St Gregory’s this-morning at 9.00. A small group has been studying ‘welcome’ over the last two weeks. In the first week we saw the difference between ‘friendly’ and ‘welcoming’. We saw a video of a church in which everyone was very friendly to the people they knew, while completely ignoring the person that nobody knew. The friendliest churches can sometimes be the least welcoming, and while everyone there is deliriously happy in their ‘friendly’ church, they do not even see the person in need of welcome.

Our Gospel and first reading speak of welcome. The woman from Shunem made Elisha welcome in her home, and was rewarded for this. If you continue to read on in 2 Kings, you will find more of this story. (2 Kings 4:17-37)

In the Gospel, the first part of Jesus’ teaching can seem to be a bit strange. We have to read this in the context of seeing Jesus in the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the sick person, the prisoner, the destitute. If we were to devote our entire energy and time to our family and ignore Jesus in the needy, we come under his judgement. The sheep were rewarded because they made the stranger welcome. (Matthew 25:35). The goats were very friendly in their comfort zone, but failed to make Jesus welcome. (Matthew 25:43)

The second session on welcome took the question of welcome a whole lot further. In the same video we had seen the week before, after the people were ignored and only spoken to by the ‘official welcomer’, they were seated in the midst of the congregation, not knowing whether to sit, stand or kneel, having no idea what was going on.

Welcome is not just at the church door, and does not just involve those who are at the church door. Any of us could have a ‘stranger’ come and sit next to us. If the person sat next to us was in church for the first time, or the first time for a long time, how welcome will they feel?

The Three Bees



Believe

Behave

Belong

These are three parts of our Christian life. Our belief, our faith in Christ, our obedience to his teaching and our belonging to his Church, the community of faith.

This sequence of ‘Believe, behave, belong’ is not the natural sequence. When a child is born, it automatically belongs — to its

mother, and father, to a family, an extended family. Belonging comes first. The child that belongs is taught the faith and comes to a personal relationship with Jesus, and as a result of believing comes to model their behaviour on the teachings of Jesus and his Church.

If we are welcoming people who we hope will come to faith, we must first allow them to belong. A person to whom no one speaks is unlikely to feel they belong. A person who does not know anyone else there is unlikely to feel that they belong. If they do not feel they belong, they are unlikely to discover the beauty of our faith. If we do not welcome those whose life-styles are different, they are unlikely ever to understand why we live as we do (or ought to do!).

It is true that someone secure in their faith can visit another church, knowing that their belonging is at a deeper level, but this can hardly be expected of someone who is new to the life of faith, or new to Catholic practice.

The ‘One-step Challenge’ to become more welcoming as a church is more than just having people at the door. It has to be something we all subscribe to in our pews and in our inclusive friendship after Mass.

As well as Thomas Becket Catholic School this Sunday, next weekend is the Becket Festival at the Cathedral. Below is the programme:

THE BECKET FESTIVAL 7th to 9th JULY

Friday 7th July

- 11am** Mass of the Feast of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Thomas Becket in Northampton Cathedral celebrated by Archbishop Miguel Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain
- 12.30pm** **Opening of the St Thomas Centre**
- 1pm to 9pm** Veneration of the Relic in the Cathedral
- 2pm to 9pm** Confession available in the Cathedral
- 6.30 to 9pm** ‘Carbs for Caritas – see inside page
- 9.15pm** Night prayer in the Cathedral

Saturday 8th July

- 9am** **Mass with the Relic in the Cathedral**
- 1pm** **Ecumenical walking Pilgrimage** including stops at the Holy Sepulchre Church, Becket’s Well and St Peter’s Church finishing with:
- 3pm** Ecumenical Service in the Cathedral
- 7pm to 9pm** Hog Roast and Bingo – see inside page

Sunday 9th July

- 3pm** Becket Lecture from Dr Judith Champ in the St Thomas Centre
- 4pm** **Vespers of St Thomas in the Cathedral**

Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church
Oscar Alan Care
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for him and his family.

Car Park Safety: Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We 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.

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

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 Church, from 10am-12pm.

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, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be reported here soon. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Enrolment for 2024 will be in the autumn; please watch this newsletter for information nearer the time.

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

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

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.

National Catholic Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Walsingham: Sunday 23rd July from 11am to 4pm. A day of faith & fun for all the family. Please see poster for full details.

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

Dog lovers wanted! Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk

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)**

URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES

If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

Red Box / Missio Matters: The latest magazine is ready for Missio supporters to collect on a table in the entry space as you come into church. By the time you read this you will already be in church or even at home – you could always come back or collect your envelope next week. What you don't collect will be delivered. It would save me getting lost again, delivering the material, if you could pick up your copy. Your financial support is amazing. This particular magazine is very informative as to the effect of your help. It is full of data which, as a maths man, appeals to me. Hope you like it too. God bless you all. *Alec*

Choir notes: The next choir practice is after evening Mass on Thursday 29 June, the Holy Day feast of St Peter and St Paul. *Alec*

Save the Date: There will be a fund-raising event for the Cathedral Foodstore featuring Fynnus Fogg on Saturday evening, September 2nd at the St Thomas Centre (the Cathedral Hall). More information later.

Walking Pilgrimage - Becket Festival: Walk will begin on Saturday 8th July at Northampton Cathedral at 1pm where the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, His Excellency, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, will lead a prayer to begin our pilgrimage. From there we will walk to the Holy Sepulchre Church, Becket's Well, St Peter's & the remains of the Castle before returning to the Catholic Cathedral for an ecumenical service at 3pm. At each stop a different denomination will be asked to lead a brief prayer before we continue our journey. We hope as many people as possible will join us for this journey of prayer. See poster for full details.

Refreshment Donations: Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

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| 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 |

Alpha in the Autumn: The sessions will start in September, and will be an 'on-line' course through Zoom. However, so that those on the course can meet face-to-face, there will be a welcome session the week before the official start, on Tuesday 12th September in the Hall at 7.15 pm. Please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha and the zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session. For any who live far away, we are sorry if you are unable to get to the 'face-to-face' session on 12th September, please do not let this put you off joining the course.

Mission Prayer

Heavenly Father
it is your will that we should make disciples of all nations.
We ask you to bless the mission of our Diocese of Northampton
and guide our hearts and minds
so that your will might be done
and your kingdom be build up here on earth.
We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
without which our work is in vain,
and we entrust ourselves to your beloved Son,
for we know that he is with us for all time, now and for ever.
Amen.

Assembly Insight

"Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than as Church which is unhealthy from being confined and clinging to its own security."
(Pope Francis: *The Joy of the Gospel*)

Prayer 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 2nd July 2023, 13th Sunday of Year A

Today we hear only the beginning of this story from the Second Book of the Kings. Recognising this frequent passer-by as a holy man, the Shunammite woman hospitably offers him a place to stay each time he passes. Elisha promises she will have a child. Some years later the child became ill and died, and the woman urgently travels the twenty miles to Carmel, confident that Elisha will heal her son, and Elisha brings her son back to life.

The long Psalm, written during or after the exile, reminds God of his promise to David of an everlasting dynasty, and expresses confidence that God keeps his promises.

Paul's meditation on redemption leads him to ask "Shall we persist in sin that grace may abound?" No, he says, God's grace is not prompted by sin but is the expression of God's love. "We

Vacancy at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School. Teaching Assistant (SEN support). We are looking for a highly committed and passionate individual to support a specific child needing one to one support to help them achieve their full potential. Closing Date is Friday 7th July. For more information and an application pack, please go to <https://www.stmaryscatholicprimary.northants.sch.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=96>

were buried with Christ through baptism into death". After our ritual death in baptism we must unite ourselves with Christ to share in his bodily resurrection.

In Matthew's gospel Jesus concludes his teachings on the requirements and rewards of discipleship. Disciples must accept the trials that it entails, burying ourselves completely in Christ. But acts of charity and hospitality will be rewarded, just as the Shunammite woman found.

(2 Kings 4: 8-11, 14-16; Psalm 88(89): 2-3, 16-19; Romans 6: 3-4, 8-11; Matthew 10: 37-42)

Chris Oliver

Hannah Heath and Net Ministries

Hannah is having a meal to fundraise for her second year as a missionary with NET ministries. It will take place at 7.00 pm on Tuesday July 4th. You will receive two delicious courses of food, followed by a short presentation on what the money will be going towards. To book your place (there is a £5 deposit just so we know who is coming!), please come and speak to me after Mass or email hannahmaryheath13@gmail.com or. We would love to see you there!

'Carbs for Caritas' Fundraising Event: Pizza, Pasta and Quiz Fun! Friday 7th July, 6.30pm – 9.00pm:

This event will take place in St Thomas Centre. Followed by the night prayer at 9:15pm in the Cathedral.

Caritas Northampton is responsible for the promotion, establishment and support of various social outreach projects within the diocese. One of their current outreach programmes is to establish parish dementia support groups within the diocese. There is currently over 944,000 people in the UK with dementia and our diocese has some of the highest levels within the UK (E.g. Northampton has 8200 sufferers) and it is estimated that 1 in 3 of us will become carers for someone with dementia in our lifetime. We already have a successful pilot scheme running supporting 120+ sufferers and their families and

providing a valuable service to the community. To be able to mirror this success in our parishes we will be holding a 'Carbs for Caritas' event as part of the Becket festival. This will take place on Friday, 7th July 6.30pm – 9.00pm with all proceeds going towards this project. The event will consist of a range of delicious Italian food along with a friends and family quiz where you will have the opportunity to win a range of great prizes. This costs £10 per team (up to 6 people per team). Please book via bishopssecretary@northamptondiocese.org

Food Bank Fundraiser: Hog Roast and Bingo Fun! Saturday 8th July, 7.00 pm – 9.30 pm

The St Thomas Centre foodbank has been open since 2020 helping local families in need and now supports over 76 families a week by ensuring they have the necessary food and toiletries. They have a dedicated team of volunteers and are self-funded. All proceeds raised from this Hog Roast and Family Bingo event will go directly to the food bank to purchase much needed supplies.

This event will be held in the St Thomas Centre and start directly at 7pm, after the 6pm vigil Mass at the Cathedral, and costs £10 per

adult and £5 per child. The Hog Roast will include crackling, apple sauce and stuffing in a roll, leaf salad and coleslaw and is from Sergeants butchers. There will be an adult and family bingo run side by side so that everyone can join in with some fantastic prizes. There will also be a raffle and spot the difference during the break. To book please contact bishopssecretary@northamptondiocese.org and if you would like to donate to the foodstore or you would like to make use of the services provided please contact the parish office on 01604 714556 or email office@northamptoncathedral.org

Peter's Pence, Mission and Special Collections

When Paul was authorised to go on his missionary journeys and preach to the Gentiles, he writes describing this: "They asked only one thing, that we should remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do". (Galatians 2:10) St Paul also speaks of this in his second letter to the Corinthians. (2 Corinthians 8:1-15 and 9:1-15) The Apostles had the idea of an international collection.

The money given in the Peter's Pence collection funds the charitable work undertaken by the Vatican throughout the world and also supports the administration of the Curia. It is a worldwide collection which is taken every year around the time of the feast of SS Peter and Paul and speaks to us of our solidarity with Catholics all over the world. We will be taking this collection next week.

Next Sunday has been designated as 'Sea Sunday', and many parishes will be having a second collection for Stella Maris. We will have that collection on August 6th and the Diocesan Mission collection on July 23rd thus avoiding consecutive Sundays.

The Ministry of Welcome

In a parish far away and many years ago, the priest became aware of a disturbance at the back of church just before Sunday Mass. On investigation he discovered a 90-year-old lady loudly complaining. A family, new to the parish had come to the church for the first time, and with due humility, occupied the back row. Shortly before Mass was due to start the elderly lady arrived and objected to the family. "I have sat in that seat since 1904", she protested. That may have been true, but what is also true is that the young family never came again.

In the training last week we were shown that welcome is not just the ministry of those who stand at the door and hand out books — indeed that is not really part of that ministry at all — it is the ministry of each one of us to ensure that the welcome is not just at the door, but in the pew; to the person sat next to us, in front or behind. Families with children may appreciate help, and complaining about a noisy child or even a disapproving look is no help at all. A sympathetic smile can make a big difference.