



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 LETTER

CONCERNING THE TERMINALLY ILL (END OF LIFE) BILL

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Terminally Ill (End of Life) Bill, as it is formally known, received a second reading at the end of November. This is currently with the committee which will scrutinise it before the legislation is returned for further voting in the House of Commons. Our country is divided about this legislation. Some have campaigned for this over a long period of time.

Nevertheless, there is a broad coalition of voices, from various religious traditions and none, who are very concerned about the implications of the idea that individuals may be able to commit suicide with the assistance of medical professionals.

The research briefing from the House of Commons Library puts things this way: 'The broad aim of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill is to allow adults aged 18 and over, who have mental capacity, are terminally ill and are in the final six months of their life, to request assistance from a doctor to end their life.'

It will be challenging to overturn this proposed legislation, but not impossible. Within our diocese, 13 MPs voted for this Bill and 10 voted against it.

From what we hear, some politicians have serious concerns about the proposed safeguards around the legislation. Will there really be rigorous oversight to prevent misuse of the right to end one's life? It is clear that these safeguards are unravelling.

How many people know with certainty that someone is in the final six months of mortal life? We pray the expert evidence being presently considered will also focus upon the wonderful palliative care that takes place in hospices and other places.

Palliative care professionals have already expressed concern about the funding and research in this important area of medicine. Will this proposed new legislation damage the provision of palliative care even further? The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales have already submitted evidence to the Bill Committee emphasising that this legislation is unworkable.

This proposed law is a bad tree that cannot bear good fruit. Christ's disciples have much to encourage them to pray and work for the promotion of a culture of life. The mystery of eternal life we profess is presented so well by St Paul in today's liturgy: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' The truths of the Gospel proclaimed by our Lord have long been challenged and

disparaged within a society that is largely indifferent to the fundamental kerygmatic mysteries of our faith –

We are created in God's image and likeness;

Despite humanity's fall from grace, God sent his beloved Son amongst us.

Jesus lovingly offered his life in loving obedience to his Father and for our sake.

He rose again in his human body and ascended to the Father, fulfilling his promise to send the Holy Spirit to us.

As the Body of Christ, the Church seeks to build the Kingdom our Saviour inaugurated in his life, death and resurrection.

And so, I invite you to join me with two actions. The first is to pray.

We pray for those who are seriously ill and dying. May they discover the hope of eternal life we share in Christ. And may they receive good palliative care in their suffering.

We pray for those in the medical profession who will feel very challenged by this proposed legislation.

We pray for our political representatives that their consciences will encourage them to stand against this bad legislation.

And please write to your MP. Your letter does not need to be long or complicated. Just reach out to them and encourage them to vote against assisted dying.

We may ask ourselves, what's the point? No one will take notice of my prayers or actions. Against these understandable feelings, I am very encouraged by the words of the apostle Paul at the end of today's second reading: 'Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.'

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ *David J Oakley*

Bishop of Northampton.

Given at Northampton on 22nd February 2025, The Feast of St Peter's Chair, and appointed to be read or distributed in all churches and chapels of the Diocese on the weekend of the Eighth Sunday of the Year, 1st and 2nd March, 2025

Notices of Interest

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Priests Calendars are available, £10 each. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

I have had notice of the availability of the new Weekday and Daily Missals from about April 27th. The Weekday Missal has the Masses for each day, cost £55.00 and the Daily Missal has all the Masses, cost £69.00. I can pre-order or wait till they appear. There was no shortage of the Sunday Missals so no need to panic! *Kathleen Healey*

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

Divine Will Prayer Group: The Divine Will prayer group will take place via zoom on the first Thurs of every month 7pm, with the remaining Thursdays of the month at Our Lady's Great Billing 7pm. All welcome. Those wanting to join the zoom meeting message Mark on 07724 337196.

Choir Notes: our next practices, as we prepare for Holy Week, are at 11-12 am on Saturdays March 8, 15, 22, [not 29] and April 12 [not 5th]. Easter Sunday is April 20. *Alec*

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham: This year our diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham takes place on Saturday 14th June. The pilgrimage will begin with Mass at the Basilica in the Catholic Shrine at midday followed by lunch & at 3pm pilgrims process from the Shrine, on the holy mile to the Abbey Grounds for the final service. Parish groups are welcome to attend & encouraged to bring parish banners with them for the procession. All are welcome.

Writing to your MP: Please be aware that the Member of Parliament for Northampton South voted against the End of Life Bill for the Terminally Ill at second reading, while the member for Northampton North voted in favour. It is helpful to recognise the previous voting of the person to whom you are writing, as well as to personalise your own story, particularly any good experiences you may have had of end of life care through hospices, Marie Curie or MacMillan Nurses. There are too many examples of bad care of the dying; generally where best practice has not been followed. The remedy for failure to follow best practice must be better practice, not the killing of the patient!

The rotas for Readers and Extraordinary Ministers have been issued for the period March to May 2025. Hard copies are available in the sacristy if required.

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.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 3rd March, 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 2024/5: First Holy Communion 2025 Registration is now complete, and there is no more space this year.

Confirmation in 2025: Apologies that this date was missed; this was caused by unavoidable circumstances. Please will any wishing to enrol please email to childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk to register that you want to enrol for the next Confirmation. The Confirmation will be in the afternoon of Sunday September 7th 2025.

'A Journey of Hope' Lenten Accompaniment Prayer: For the Jubilee Year this Lent, there is an opportunity of a retreat in daily life, on Mondays from 3rd March. Begin or deepen your prayer life, get to know the Scriptures better, and above all, grow in faith and in love for the Lord who loves you. You will receive weekly one-to-one support from an experienced prayer guide on zoom. To find out more, go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/northamptondiocese/1506153>

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (next – 29th March), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

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)**

Ceili Dancing is ongoing in the Church Hall every Wednesday evening, 7.30-8.45pm. Everyone welcome to join our friendly group. To find out more phone Pat on 07710624921, or just turn up!

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: 10.00 am-12.00 pm.

Tots @ St Gregory's: If you have the care of a baby or pre-school child on Tuesday mornings join us in the church hall from 9.30-11.30. Just £1 for you & any number of children & includes snacks for the children & yourself - excellent value for money! We run throughout term time. Looking forward to seeing you!

Exploring Safeguarding: Take a look at safeguarding and what it means for ourselves and our parishes. The venue is Holy Ghost Church, Luton on Saturday 8 March from 10am-1pm. Previous groups have found the presentation inspiring & the best safeguarding training they have ever received. Sign up at

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.tickettailor.com/events/northamptondiocese/1544289&source=gmail-imap&cust=1738149208000000&usg=AOvVaw1K0HOvOM-cmcuwMRGI4R3v>https://www.tickettailor.com/events/northamptondiocese/1544289>

PARISH PILGRIMAGE: Following a number of requests for a Parish Pilgrimage, Sacred Heart parish are looking at a visit to Wintershall, to experience The Story of Jesus, brought to life. Discover the wonder of Jesus' life with an unforgettable event for all the family. The Life of Christ is a play like no other, placing you in the middle of an immersive theatre experience. Join over a hundred actors in the stunning grounds of Wintershall Estate as this magnificent story is movingly recreated with authentic detail in an epic open-air production. Watch the Wedding in Cana, the Feeding of the 5000 and the Last Supper unfold before your eyes. Visit Bethlehem, Galilee and Jerusalem. Fabulous day for all the family. Details to follow but keep the date free!

Refreshment Donations: Please note that today is the last Sunday of donations to Gregory Care --- from next Sunday donations are for CAFOD. 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

Prayer for Peace for Ukraine, the Holy Land and all places of strife

**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.**

Scripture Readings, 8th Sunday of Ordinary Time 2nd March 2025

The Wisdom book called Ecclesiasticus or Sirach was written in Hebrew about 200 BC by Ben Sira, a Jewish sage, and later translated into Greek. It was not translated into Latin by Jerome, but the Greek version was accepted as canonical by the early Church, and there are many allusions to it in the new Testament. At a time of increasing pagan Greek influence, Ben Sira showed that Israel's religion was still a firm basis for moral living. He gives many practical examples, helping Christians of every age to apply moral truths to their own times. Today's reading reminds us not to judge a person before hearing them speak.

The Psalm extols God's justice: crime may appear to be rewarded but wrong-doers will be punished in eternity.

Paul concludes his teaching to the Corinthians on the resurrection of

the body with these triumphant words from Isaiah and Hosea: "Death is swallowed up in victory"; "Death, where is your sting?" After death our mortal nature puts on immortality. We must therefore never give up hope, confident in the victory God gives us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Luke's gospel Jesus ends his sermon on the plain, which included the beatitudes, by reminding us how our actions and words reflect what is in our hearts.

Psalm Response: It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.
(Sirach 27:4-7; Psalm 91(92); 1 Cor 15:54-58; Luke 6:39-45)

Chris Oliver

Chant used for the Communion procession at 11.00



We Dare to Hope.

This is a five-session Lent course, exploring the theme of this Holy Year through five events of hope in the Gospels. There will be opportunity to follow this course together on Tuesday evenings through Lent, starting at 7.00 pm in the Sacristy. All are welcome. After Easter, Alpha will begin on Tuesdays.

Navigation: About You, Your Family, Your Skills, Your Church, Your Diocese, Support

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St Gregory the Great Church, Northampton

Sunday	Wednesday	Holy Day
<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 7.00am
<input type="checkbox"/> 11.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 7.00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am
<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 7.00pm
<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.00am	

Newsletters: You can sign up to receive church newsletters by email or by SMS. Newsletter for St Gregory the Great SMS Email No

CASPAR
"Your Church" tab. Please sign up. To receive the newsletter at home; choose the 'email' box at the bottom of the window.

You can also indicate which Mass you usually come to.

Lent begins this week

This Holy Year has the theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope', and Pope Francis invites us to 'journey in hope' through Lent this year. On any journey we expect the scenery to change as we travel, and Lent is a God-given opportunity for us to make changes to our life, not just for the days of Lent but our journey towards Heaven continues.

The journey itself is important, and the prime journey in Scripture is the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. This is a model of our journey towards heaven.

On any journey it is important to be sure that the right route is being followed, and Pope Francis asks us to make good examination of our conscience, a call to conversion; that is to say, and ongoing call to fidelity of Christ, and to leave behind the occasions of sin. It is significant that when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea they soon found themselves in the "Wilderness of Sin" (*Exodus 16:1*), but they could not stay there. (*Exodus 17:1*)

Likewise, we must move on from sin. We are encouraged to think of our spiritual journey in terms of the many migrants seeking a better life. Our spiritual understanding of 'better' is not the same as those seeking a materially better life, but there is effort needed for both journeys.

It is hard to think of the Biblical Exodus without also thinking of those of our brothers and sisters who in our own day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for

themselves and their loved ones. A first call to conversion thus comes from the realisation that we are all pilgrims in this life

We also must realise that we are 'fellow-pilgrims'; we are making this journey in company with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are not an exclusive community, rather we seek to bring everyone with us. As we travel together, we grow together, recognising the good in each other and seeking to eliminate the bad in ourselves.

Let us ask ourselves in the presence of the Lord whether we show ourselves welcoming to those both near and far. Whether we make others feel a part of the community or keep them at a distance.

The journey of Lent is a journey in hope in that it ends at Easter, which is the centre of our hope for heaven and eternal life. Our hope is not merely a cosy optimism, but must be realised in our day-to-day life. The Divine Mercy is not just a form of prayer, but must be the ground of our hope --- that we need forgiveness and that we can be forgiven. The story of the Tower of Babel tells us that we cannot get to heaven simply by our own efforts, we need divine grace.

We must avoid the trap of self-reliance, of thinking that it is just our own hope rather than the hope for humanity and that our hope must inspire us to encourage and help others in their journey. Our hope must inspire in us a commitment to justice and fraternity and to care for our common home in such a way that no one feels excluded.