



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

The Witness of the Martyrs

Pope Francis is continuing his talks on evangelisation; last week we read of the imagery used by St Paul of having on our feet the enthusiasm for spreading the Gospel of peace. (*Ephesians 6:15*)

Today, following the general audience teaching that Pope Francis gave on 19th April, we are considering the witness given by the martyrs. Today we understand the word ‘martyr’ to refer to someone who gave their life for the Gospel, but the meaning of the word ‘martyr’ comes from the Greek *μαρτυρος* (*martyros*) which means ‘witness’. The scholar Origen wrote in the third century:

“Now everyone who bears witness to the truth, whether he support it by words or deeds, or in whatever way, may properly be called a witness (martyr); but it has come to be the custom of the brotherhood, since they are struck with admiration of those who have contended to the death for truth and valour, to keep the name of martyr more properly for those who have borne witness to the mystery of godliness by shedding their blood for it.” (*In Johannem, II, 210*)

We see that the meaning of the word had changed by the time that Origen was writing. Pope Francis quotes a sermon by St Augustine preached on the feast of St Lawrence:

“He performed the office of deacon; it was there that he administered the sacred chalice of Christ’s blood; there that he shed his own blood for the name of Christ. The blessed apostle John clearly explained the mystery of the Lord’s Supper when he said, ‘Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we too ought to lay down our lives for the brethren’ (*1 John 3:16*). Saint Lawrence understood this, my brethren, and he did it; and he undoubtedly prepared things similar to what he received at that table. He loved Christ in his life, he imitated him in his death” (*Sermons 34, 14; pl 38, 1395-1397*)

The point that Pope Francis emphasises is in the last sentence; that a martyr loves Christ in life and imitates him in death. We are not all called to martyrdom in the final sense, but we are all called to love Christ in our life.

We think of the early centuries of the Church as an age of martyrs; the vast majority of the Apostles and the large number of martyrs who died under the persecution of the Roman Empire, many of whom are celebrated in the calendar of the Church, although for many of them, we know little other than their names, such as St George whom we celebrated last week.

We also think of the age of the martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in this land; the 40 canonised martyrs along with Saint John Fisher and St Thomas More. There were also martyrs among the missionaries to the ‘New World’ of the Americas and the Far East. However, Pope Francis reminds us that martyrs are more numerous in our age than they were in the first centuries.

Pope Francis gives us an example of modern martyrdom in Yemen:

“A land that, for many years, has been wounded by a terrible, forgotten war, which has caused many deaths and still causes many people to suffer today, especially children. In this very land there have been shining witnesses of faith, such as that of the Missionary Sisters of Charity, who gave their lives there. They are still present today in Yemen, where they offer assistance to elderly people who are sick and to people with disabilities. Some of them have suffered martyrdom, but the others continue; they risk their lives, but they keep on going. These sisters welcome everyone, of any religion, because charity and fraternity have no boundaries. In July 1998, while they were returning home after Mass, Sister Aletta, Sister Zelia and Sister Michael were killed by a fanatic because they were Christian. More recently, in March 2016, shortly after the beginning of the still ongoing conflict, Sister Anselm, Sister Marguerite, Sister Reginette and Sister Judith were killed together with some laypeople who helped them in their charity work among the least. They are the martyrs of our time. Among these laypeople killed, as well as Christians there were some Muslim faithful who worked with the religious sisters. It moves us to see how the witness of blood can unite people of different religions. One should never kill in the name of God, because for him we are all brothers and sisters. But together one can give one’s life for others.”

The lower of the two lamps that are to the right of the Tabernacle in the church is for Yemen: the basket in which the lamp sits is from that troubled country. It is easy to forget long-running wars that are not being reported in the media, overwhelmed by more recent conflicts such as that in Sudan and Ukraine. The upper lamp is for the Holy Land, also in constant need of our prayers.

Among other recent martyrdoms, there have been many in Nigeria and in other parts of the world, and their witness should encourage us who face so much less of a risk to our life in our following of Christ.

“Although martyrdom is asked of only a few, “nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men. They must be prepared to make this profession of faith even in the midst of persecutions, which will never be lacking to the Church, in following the way of the cross” (*Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, §42*).

May the holy Martyrs pray for us that we may be faithful witnesses to Christ in whatever way he may call us, whatever our vocation may be.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 19th April 2023

Notices of Interest

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.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Sara Sobczak, Bruno Sobczak,
Anthony-Alexandru Zanoceanu,
Miruna Petrila and Alfred Henry Chappell
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

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!
There is now a small display of items for 1st Holy Communion and Confirmation. Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.

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

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham:

10th June 2023:

A coach will leave from St. Gregory's at 8am on Saturday 10th June, leaving Walsingham at about 5.00pm. Cost £25 per person (payable in advance). I understand that this is considerably more than in previous years, but the cost of coach hire has also increased dramatically. Please see poster for full details. To book, please speak to Caryl in the Office, or add your details to the list in the Lobby area and see one of the Clergy to pay.



Church Heating: Weekday Mass is now back in the church; 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 on Monday 22nd May in the Sacristy at 7pm. 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.

The Sheppard Singers in Concert: You may remember the Shepard Singers gave us a beautiful recital a few weeks ago. On Sunday 14th May they will again be performing, this time at **Christ Church**, Northampton, NN1 5LL. The concert starts at 3pm – all welcome.

Are You Interested in the Diaconate? If so, there will be an information morning as follows: Sat. 13th 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.

The Diocesan Assembly: Last week's newsletter contained a great deal of information about the Diocesan Assembly on 15th July; there will be preparation sessions for the delegates of our Pastoral area here at St Gregory's on May 24th and June 7th in church at 7.00 pm.

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, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

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.

Choir notes: Practice Thursday (18th May, Ascension Day) after evening Mass: 7:45 – 9:00 pm. Come and join us as we strive to make our liturgy more inspiring. *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)**

Parish Finances – It's that time of year again! The new planned giving envelopes for the coming year are now available. Many people have transferred to giving by standing order; this is very helpful for the parish, and many thanks for this. For those who are using envelopes, please collect yours from the table in front of the confessionals.

Prayer for our Country: We are invited to use the three days leading up to the coronation of King Charles III as a special time of prayer. While it is recognised that not everyone is a supporter of the monarchy, and many do not see themselves as British, the reality is that we live in this country, and in many respects the country is in desperate need of prayer. We have a cost-of-living crisis, our health service is in a mess, there is industrial unrest in much of the state-run services, and our immigration service is overwhelmed. Three days of prayer for our country must be a good idea. This will be from Wednesday May 3rd to Friday May 5th, and will conclude with a Mass, at St Gregory's at 7.00 pm.

Eucharistic Minister's Training: The ministry of giving the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful is important, and is a ministry of service. It is not a reward for the exceptionally holy. We all acknowledge that we are not worthy to receive Christ in the Eucharist, and the receiving is the greater honour than the giving. As we return to the normal practice of offering Holy Communion from the Chalice, we will need to recruit new Eucharistic Ministers, and for this there will need to be training in the practicalities of this ministry. Deacon Michael is compiling a list for this, and there is a Diocesan training course which will be run here starting in a few weeks, to be completed by Corpus Christi.

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 30th April 2023, 4th Sunday of Easter Year A

Last Sunday we heard the middle section of Peter's speech at Pentecost, saying the Resurrection shows Jesus was the Holy One expected by King David. Today the consequences: many of his hearers accept this and are told they must repent and be baptised. "Repent" in the sense of radically changing their life and directing it towards God. Even though Jesus does not appear to baptise during his lifetime, baptism is immediately the mark of membership of the new Christian community, at which they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The psalm celebrates God's loving care for his people, like a shepherd guarding and guiding his flock, who are looking forward to his generous end-time feast.

Peter's letter continues: God's approval comes not from justifiable punishment but from suffering patiently even when we

have done right. Christ patiently bore for us unjustified insults and hurts without retaliating, trusting completely in his Father. We must imitate the Lord our shepherd in every way, placing all our trust in him. He will "give us comfort" and "repose".

In the Gospel John also sees Jesus as the Good Shepherd. He knows each one of us and leads us. We follow him because we know his voice. He is also the gate, through which we can enter and find safety.

Psalm Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd:
there is nothing I shall want.**

(Acts 2:14,36-41; Psalm 22(23); 1 Peter 2:20-25; John 10:1-10)

Chris Oliver

Alpha continues on May 2nd 2023 — This Tuesday

Throughout the centuries, the Bible has been a fundamental part of the 'tradition' of the Church. 'Tradition' means 'that which is handed on', and the various books which make up the Bible have been handed down the generations. In every generation the Bible has been treasured, as it is described in the video. 'a love-letter from God'. As a precious gift from God and handed down the generations, we should treasure it by reading it. It is not always an 'easy read', and down the generations including our own, saints and scholars have written books to help us to put the words of Scripture into practice in our own life. We read the Bible with love, in prayer and, we hope, with understanding.

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

Gregory Care

Don't be disappointed if your invitation from the palace hasn't arrived!

*On Monday 8th May
you are invited to join in the
Coronation Big Lunch
at St Gregory's Church.*

There will be a shared table and extra goodies, games for children and adults to join in. Also there will be a fancy crown parade which we hope lots of you will take part in (the only criteria is that these should be made from recycled or repurposed materials) Watch out for the posters to register your interest and anything you could bring for the shared table (they will be around next week) This is not a fundraising event, there is no entrance fee and all games will be free to enter. This is just an opportunity for our community to get together and have a good time. We just need to know if you intend to join us.



eden project



Other Coronation Events

MULTI-FAITH CORONATION CELEBRATION SERVICE

A service will be held for all faiths to celebrate the upcoming Coronation of King Charles III on 2nd May 2023 at 6.00 pm at the Cathedral of Our Lady Immaculate & St Thomas of Canterbury. The service will be led by Bishop David.

CORONATION TRAIL

From Friday 28th April 2023 to 9th May 2023 there will be fun Coronation trail for children in the healing gardens at the Cathedral Centre. The trail is free and papers can be picked up from the St Thomas Centre reception area.

Diocesan Information Manager, 3 days per week, Start date: ASAP.

The Diocese are currently recruiting for an Information Manager to join the Diocese. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org The closing date for applications will be Friday 5th May. Interviews dates to be confirmed

We have two men in seminary training to be priests for our diocese at present

This weekend we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday. This is a day across England and Wales when we remember and pray for our Shepherds, Bishop David and our priests.

You will receive a prayer card this weekend containing our diocesan prayer for priestly vocations. Please pray this prayer individually, as a family and in prayer groups. The second collection next weekend will go towards priestly formation, seminarian formation and promoting vocations. Please prayerfully consider a gift to support this vital ministry. Without priests, we do not have the Church.