



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 Time to Act

Today is Racial Justice Sunday

At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus outlines his Mission in the synagogue in Nazareth:

*‘He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour’ (Luke 4:18-19)*

His ministry was one of compassionate involvement, concern for the disadvantaged. Aware of obstacles, including those of the Law, which limited joy and fulfilment Jesus acted. He confronted, sometimes angrily, what undermined a person’s dignity.

The theme of Racial Justice Sunday 2021 is ***A Time to Act***.

Racial issues and inequalities were identified nationally and internationally in 2020 generating awareness, emotion and outrage. In light of this Racial Justice Sunday 2021 is particularly significant.

Action is needed

Action is needed to further the cause of racial justice. What can we do?

In recent years Pope Francis has repeatedly used four verbs encouraging positive and direct action in relation to migrants and refugees, ‘Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate’. These same words are essential to advancing the cause of racial justice. None can be omitted, it is as necessary to have plans to *Promote* and *Integrate* as it is to *Welcome*.

The Gospel Reading for today: Mark 1:21-28

Jesus’ sermon in the synagogue in Capernaum triggered a reaction from a member of the congregation. (It is always unnerving to have your sermon interrupted by someone who disagrees with your words). ‘What do you want with us?’ ‘Have you come to destroy us?’

The duty of the Prophet in speaking God’s words and so bringing God’s light into lives and situations is to enlighten, to encourage, sometimes to warn. To identify what action is needed to ensure that all God’s people know they are equally valued by society and the Church.

The plea of the psalmist today is ‘...listen to his voice, harden not your hearts’.

Racial Justice Sunday is a time to absorb fully this scriptural request.

Listening to the voice of God and the voice of the Church we learn of equal love for all:

- Voices that discriminate unjustly, attitudes that undermine on the grounds of race must be opposed.
- Voices of those who feel rejected or perpetually in second place must be listened to.
- The dignity of all must be respected and promoted.

In the Church we proclaim that everyone of whatever racial origin should be Welcomed, Protected, Promoted and Integrated.

Pope Francis, in his recent book: “Let Us Dream” invites us to first see the realities that lie around us. It cannot be denied that racial injustice is one of them. He then invited us to choose. As people who have already made our choice for God within the Church, he points us to what has become known as ‘Catholic Social Teaching’, which is drawn from the Gospels, and expressed in a long sequence of Papal documents, going back to *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII; *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931 by Pius XI, and many others, most recently, *Laudato Si’* by Pope Francis in 2015. We cannot accept racism in any form; it simply is not compatible with our faith.

The final chapter of his book is entitled “A Time to Act”. The entire book is worth reading – (it is not long!) He says: “The heart of Christianity is God’s love for all peoples, and our love for our neighbours, especially those in need. To reject a struggling migrant, whatever his or her religious belief, out of fear of diluting a ‘Christian’ culture is grotesquely to misrepresent both Christianity and culture. Migration is not a threat to Christianity except in the minds of those who benefit from claiming it is. To promote the Gospel and not welcome the stranger in need, nor affirm their humanity as children of God, is to seek to encourage a culture that is Christian in name only, and emptied of all that makes it distinctive.” (page 119)

The Gospel requires us to see all humanity as brother and sister; the unborn, the foreigner, the Muslim, the Jew, the Buddhist, the Mormon, the agnostic, the atheist, the homeless, the jobless, the drug-addict, the criminal, even the person we disagree with most.

Notices of Interest

Repository: If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.00am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go.

Bible Alive for January & Lent 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.

COVID-19 Precautions: We are in lockdown, & as responsible members of our community, we obey the Government Regulations in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives & livelihoods. Now that we can return to Mass, we must continue to try to suppress the spread of the virus & support those who remain vulnerable.

Face masks: Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word The last of the three sessions is on Tuesday 16 February 2021, 7.30-8.30 pm: 'Many more began to believe in him because of his Word' (John 4:41) John's Gospel & The Season of Lent. Led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath, Adviser for Adult Faith Formation. Regrettably, this is at the same time as the first Alpha session, but is recorded and will be available to see afterwards.

The Big Church Read: Each year we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with a joint Bible Study. With the current regulations in force, our normal event cannot take place, but instead, there is an interesting opportunity being organized by Broadmead Baptist Church. The Big Church Read encourages churches to form book clubs & read a book together with videos & group questions put together by the author – all completely free. All a person has to do is buy the book & even that can be discounted. Starting at the beginning of February, Churches, small groups, book clubs, huddles & individuals across Northampton are coming together to read Pete Hughes bestselling book 'All Things New'. Starting in Genesis & working through the Scriptures, The Big Northampton Church Read through All Things New will take you on a journey into the very heart of God & His relentless passion to redeem lives, heal the nations, rewire the culture, & bring renewal to all of creation. This book sits beside the Bible Timeline, & should prove to be interesting and worthwhile. If you are interested, then please check out the website <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/allthingsnew/>, where you can order the book & sign up to receive more information. The author will be providing a weekly video as well as group questions & as a huge bonus will also be doing a live virtual Q&A.

Right to Life: A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. The evidence that babies can feel pain in the womb, and during many abortions, highlights the humanity of the unborn child and provides another important reason to introduce legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion. Right To Life UK have set up an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP, and ask them to sign this motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. It only takes 30 seconds using this easy-to-use tool. This tool can be accessed by visiting the link below: www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion

Cross in the car park: You may have seen the cross on the wall in the car park; this is a gift from Mr Gerald Smith, and is made from wood salvaged from the demolition of the Notre Dame convent school. This ties in with the 'Rood in the Wall' told in the history of the parish (<https://stgregory.org.uk/church-and-parish>).

Track and Trace: The government have now released their app to support track & trace & we have a QR code which can be scanned to record your presence at church. This is not obligatory, but should help in the important task of controlling the spread of the virus. As responsible members of society, we should comply with this request.

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

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

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

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Air Ambulance appeal in memory of Irene Howell. May she rest in peace.

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church: The webinar series has been wonderful, and thank you to all who promoted it and came along throughout the series. We have had over 3,000 views! This is definitely something we will be looking to do again in the future. If you want to catch up with any you missed, all the videos are here: <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>

Financial Support for Self-Isolation: Please see the following article regarding financial help available for those who are self-isolating:
<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/health/coronavirus/how-apply-self-isolation-financial-support-now-available-across-northamptonshire-3004756>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

First Holy Communion 2021: If you have a child who wishes to make their 1st Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at swatts49@outlook.com, who will note your name & the name & age of your child. This is still very much a first step as we are still unsure of how we can prepare the children at the moment; please be patient &, as soon as we possibly can, we'll give you more info about our programme & timings at which stage you can decide whether or not you wish to proceed.

Confirmation: Yet again we are thrown into confusion! We await more information. This continues to be difficult!

To Catholic Universe and Catholic Times readers in the parish: - at the moment you are unable to collect your paper at Mass, but you can get it delivered direct to your home every week, POST FREE. Please go to www.thecatholicuniverse.com or call them on 0161 820 5722 and they will arrange for you.
SPECIAL OFFER - 3 MONTHS: £25.00 — 12 Months: £99.00
DIGITAL COPY: 12 Months: £55.00

Parish Finances: As colder weather is here & we have the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent throughout the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous.

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)**

Scripture Readings 24th January 2021, 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

The fifth and final book of Pentateuch, Deuteronomy brings up to date the earlier Law books, and seeks to persuade Israel that their only salvation is to obey God's Law. Today's reading, promising that the Lord will raise up a Prophet like Moses, was seen by Jesus and his followers as pointing to Jesus.

The psalm invites us to worship God, who is our king and our shepherd, warning us to be more faithful than the Israelites in the desert.

In last week's reading Paul emphasised to the Corinthians that the world is passing away and they should stop arguing among themselves. They should consider carefully before giving themselves extra worries by more responsibilities. Hence the advice this week for unmarried people to remain in their present state so they can give

all their time to the Lord's affairs. But Paul goes on to make it clear he is not against marriage.

After the calling of the first disciples, Mark's Gospel continues with Jesus teaching in the synagogue. His teaching and healing authority is immediately recognised. But spirits recognise Jesus so he tells them to be quiet. Their words can have no meaning to human beings during his lifetime. Mark insists that we can only know Jesus through the Cross.

Psalm Response: **O that today you would listen to his voice!
"Harden not your hearts".**

(Deut 18: 15-20; Psalm 94(95): 1-2,6-9; 1 Cor 7: 32-35; Mark 1: 21-28)

Chris Oliver



The advertisement features a smartphone on the left displaying the text "Is there more to life than this?". To the right, it says "Tuesday evenings" and "Beginning 16th Feb for 11 weeks". Below this is the slogan "Your greatest adventure awaits...". At the bottom, there are two panels: one with a person's silhouette and the text "ALPHA COURSE" and "Explore Life Faith Meaning", and another with the "Alpha Online" logo and a large red question mark.

Alpha on Line!

Do you have questions about life? Do you want to grow in your faith in this difficult time? Do you want to connect with others?

Why not try Alpha online?

Or maybe you know someone who has questions? Maybe they wouldn't want to come to Church but they may feel comfortable joining an online course?

We really encourage you to invite them to Alpha online! Alpha is an 11 week course where people can explore the big questions of life.

We are beginning our first Alpha online this term on Tuesday evenings starting on 16th February at 7.30pm.

If you have never done Alpha or have been unable to join us because of, for example, childcare commitments in the evenings, this may be the perfect opportunity for you.

Dates:

16th and 23rd February, 2nd, 16th and 23rd March.

6th, 13th, 20th and 27th April, 11th and 18th May.

Retreat day: Sat 17th April

To receive the zoom code please sign up online (<https://stgregory.org.uk/alpha>) or email Maria Heath: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

Coming up very soon ... The Season of Lent

The present lockdown will continue at least half-way through Lent, and even then, social distancing rules will continue — it is unlikely that we will be able to resume face-to-face meetings for some time yet. Even as more and more people receive the vaccination, until there is better understanding of the transmission of the virus and the effectiveness of the vaccine, social distancing remains the best way of preventing the transmission of the disease. Whatever Lent disciplines we adopt, for most people, they will be home-based.

The Alpha course begins on Shrove Tuesday. For many of us who have done an Alpha Course, the shared meal was a significant part, and this is not possible for the on line Alpha. But a delicious pancake at home

would set you up well for the first session at 7.30 in the evening!

This would then form a good basis for keeping Lent, and be a means of growing in faith.

During Lent and in the weeks leading up to it we are also invited to consider how we can live more simply, and put ideas into practice. If we can all be more aware of the impact that our decisions have on the environment, on our neighbours and on future generations, we can come closer to living a life that is truly sustainable. Small changes can have a big impact over time. We will also be supporting the CAFOD water appeal.

Special Collection today: Home Missions

Last year, during the total lockdown we missed a number of special collections, and most of them were squeezed in before Christmas, but one was not; the Home Missions collection. This is actually one of supreme importance. The Mission of the Church lies at the heart of the reason for the Church to exist at all. Jesus' last command was to 'go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News' (*Mark 16:15*), and while the Red Box collection is our response to that call to Mission overseas, Northampton is also part of the world, and the Good News must be proclaimed here too. However, our financial contribution, although important, is not the whole story!

The Mission of the Church underpins all her activity — worship, teaching, prayer, pastoral work, social care. It is the reason why we have the building and care for it, it is why we have bishops, priests and deacons.

So, while we can hope for a generous response to the financial collection today, the more important response will be in the form of a commitment of the heart to active support to the mission of the Church here in this parish. Alpha is one of the means of Mission here, and everyone can support this by prayer; how about joining the on line Alpha starting on Shrove Tuesday — see above!

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish.



SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

31st January	Home Missions
28th February	CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26th Feb)
2nd April	Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places
25th April	Diocesan Priests' Training Fund
16th May	Mass Media
20th June	Day for Life
27th June	Peter's Pence
11th July	Apostleship of the Sea
19th September	Home Mission Sunday
3rd October	CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1st October)
24th October	Mission Sunday
7th November	Bishop's Maintenance Fund
14th November	Sick & Retired Priests' Fund

