



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 New Beginning

New Year; COP28 and a New Boiler

This Sunday marks the beginning of a new Church Year; in the Sunday cycle, we are beginning Year B, the year in which we read St Mark's Gospel during the Sundays in Ordinary Time (as well as part of St John's Gospel, because Mark is shorter than Matthew or Luke).

It will not have escaped the notice of most of us that the heating system is not fully functional, and there is a famous (infamous) law that decrees that anything that can go wrong will go wrong, and that it will happen at the worst possible time. Following that law, the problem with the heating comes just as the weather turns much colder!

It also comes just as the Climate Change conference in Dubai is opening, and it is reported by the United Nations that 2023 is on course to be the hottest year on record globally. Many records have been broken; the highest concentration of greenhouse gasses, least Antarctic ice levels, highest sea levels and the highest ocean temperatures.

The coming together of the Church's New Year and these two other events should make us pause for thought and prayer.

Our present system is fired by gas — a fossil fuel which contributes to climate change and is becoming increasingly expensive. It was designed to run with two boilers, each contributing half the heating needed. This was necessary to comply with regulations concerning the flues, but is a major blessing at this point when one boiler has completely failed, as we are not left without any heating; in fact, the one boiler is sufficient to heat the hall and sacristy, although struggles to heat the church.

It is important to replace the failed boiler as quickly as possible; in the best possible case, it is likely to take several weeks before this can be done. However, that does not end the problem; as the remaining boiler is 18 years old, and close to the end of its working life, and we pray that it will survive the winter. We must make provision for its replacement, if possible before it finally ceases working.

Apparently it is now regarded that 18 years is a good life for a modern boiler. They are now made of light-weight materials and physically small. They are much more efficient than their older cast iron predecessors, but do have a shorter life expectancy. On the other hand, technological advances mean that improvements come more frequently, and each replacement is more efficient, more eco-friendly and supposedly more reliable than previous versions

The most important change has not so much been in terms of improved gas boilers, but rather in the technology of heat pumps, and avoiding, as far as possible, the use of fossil fuels.

There have been a number of case studies of churches using heat pumps — a search on the internet will highlight some of them. This may be a better way forward than a second gas boiler. Indications are that while for most days when only gentle heating is required a heat pump may be effective, there needs to be a further source of heat on really cold days.

St Mary's University at Twickenham have published 'Guidance on developing strategy for decarbonising Catholic diocesan building stock' for the Diocese of Salford in collaboration with the Laudato Si' institute and the Laudato Si' Centre in Manchester have produced a guide to reducing our carbon footprint, also for the Diocese of Salford.

The majority of work seems to have been done within the Church of England, which is not surprising as they have far more buildings in this country than we have. Many of them are on the same scale as St Gregory's, and have similar issues of lack of effective insulation, draughts and high ceilings, and we can learn from their experience.

However, there are also even newer technologies becoming available which we should investigate. One is infra-red panel heating. These are not the older type that glow red, but ones which emit infra-red radiation which warms people but not the air. The advantage of them is that they need very little warm-up time and are not affected by draughts. They are much cheaper to install but more expensive to run, but because they do not need to be turned on several hours before their effect is noticeable, may actually not be so expensive overall. If this can be combined with installing solar panels on the roof, it might be the way forward.

Cost should not be the only determining factor; COP28, Laudato Si' and our own sense of responsibility must be at the fore of our thinking. While the immediate plan must be to get heating restored as quickly as possible, we should begin a conversation regarding the longer-term future of how we heat the church.

Our experience with the Synod should inform and help us to do this; we have been taught about gracious listening, and we have the need to come to a decision in which everyone can participate. In the meanwhile, we can all try to become as well-informed as possible about this.

Notices of Interest

Car Park Safety: 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: There is a small display of cards & mementoes for Confirmation. Christmas cards, books & items are be on sale. Catholic diaries with the order of the Mass are already available. **PLEASE** can anyone help with sales to help my loyal, small group of helpers? Anyone with a calculator can do it - all items priced! Please note that we can only accept cash! Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.

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

Carol Singing: Would you like to join members of the choir and 9am music team singing Christmas carols at the Crescent House Care Home, on Thursday 7th December from 2pm till 3pm? Please let Alec or Ro on the organ stool know if you'd like to come along and spread some Christmas joy.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour remains as Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Sacristy.

Alpha in the Autumn: Alpha is now running weekly on-line, Tuesday evenings. For more info visit www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha

Choir Notes: Saturday morning practices will take place 11-12.30pm every week until 17th December. *Alec*

Church Cleaning: Many thanks to all who turned up for Church cleaning – you were all stars!! The next clean will be on Wednesday 20th December to get the Church ready for Christmas – all help gratefully received. Thereafter, the routine will revert to last Saturday of the month, starting with 27th January. Thank you!

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.

Thomas Becket School Vacancy: Vacancy for RE Teacher, closing date for application 10th December. For details, please go to –

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/teacher-of-re-with-possible-trl-for-head-of-year-role-for-the-right-candidate-pounds-5-345pa-becket-way-kettering-road-north-northampton-nn3-6ht-195655>

Tots @ St Gregory's: St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

Rotas for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: New rotas will be sent out during the week. Should you be away when rostered, please contact Deacon Michael by phone/text on 07999808997 – he will arrange cover. Thank you for your contribution to our Parish Liturgy

Fire Safety – Important notice. We have had trays made to go under the racks where candles burn to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on these trays & must not be stacked one on top of another.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 8th January at 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 2023: All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered. Because of the large number of children, there will be separate sessions for the oldest. All the families concerned have been notified

Confirmation in 2023: Bishop David will give the Sacrament of Confirmation at St Gregory's this Friday, 1st December. Please pray for those being Confirmed.

Mission Northampton: There will be a weekly Zoom course entitled "Secrets of Paul", lasting 10 weeks on Wednesdays starting on 10th January and running until 20th March (with a break for half-term on 21st February). There is a charge of £10 for the course, & visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/> to register.

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.

Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent	The Hope Centre
to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time	Gregory Care
to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	
Through Lent and Eastertide:	CAFOD
Ordinary Time until the end of August:	Refreshment Fund
September until the Harvest collection:	CAFOD
<i>After harvest until the beginning of Advent:</i>	<i>The Bible Society</i>

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

Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:

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

Bookings are open for Lux 2024. For school years 7 to 13. Our theme this year is Dive. See the website for more information and to book: <https://nyimo.org/lux-dive/>. If you have any questions then please email info@nyimo.org.

3rd December 2023, 1st Sunday of Advent Year B

The reading from third Isaiah is part of a prayer written around the end of Israel's exile. Their leaders have been arguing instead of rebuilding the Temple. The prophet recalls God's blessings on Israel in the past, and desperately begs the Lord to come once more in his mercy to the aid of his people, who all now humbly confess their sinfulness. God is our Father, and we are clay, to be formed by his hand.

The Psalm pleads with God to restore his vineyard, Israel, to its former favour. Especially the northern tribes, threatened by Assyria.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians was prompted by internal rivalries. He can't stop talking about Jesus. God has now come, giving "all the graces" "through Jesus Christ", and joining us to his Son.

Since Vatican II we are blessed by reading all through each gospel in turn. Listening to what each evangelist actually says may help us to sense different Christian communities gradually developing their understanding of Christ. This Advent we start the year of Mark,

whose gospel is the earliest and shortest. It is the gospel in which no human being recognises or understands Jesus before his death. Today we have Mark's version of "Stay awake!", immediately before Jesus' passion begins.

Psalm Response: **God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

(Isa 63:16-17; 64:3-8; Ps 79:2-3,15-16,18-19; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37)

Chris Oliver

We have benefitted from Chris Oliver's notes on the Scripture Readings for many years now. Please pray for the soul of Marina Oliver, Chris' wife. Her funeral will take place at the church of St Anne, Nantwich at 11.30 am on Wednesday 20th December. May she rest in peace.

A letter from Bishop David for the 1st Sunday of Advent 2023



In this first week of the advent season, I wish to consider the theme of 'Hope'. Let me share with you some words from the Prophet Isaiah,

"Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, let the wasteland rejoice and bloom, let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, let it rejoice and sing for joy".

I love the words of the prophets because they speak to us so eloquently of what hope involves. They looked forward to a time they could not imagine in their own life experience. They looked forward to a time when God would do something new, then the Lord would renew and refresh his people. I think that pinpoints the meaning of hope, we do not hope in ourselves or what the human race can achieve by its own effort. Hope is rooted in what God will do. Hope is founded upon the concept of salvation history that the Lord has made promises to his people and he will fulfil them. And so, you may imagine that God has already fulfilled his promises by sending his beloved Son, the word made flesh, Jesus.

However, some of God's promises still remain to be fulfilled. Jesus has promised that he will come again at the end of time, in glory he will return in majesty and the whole of creation will recognize him. There is a tremendous amount of Hope involved in that promise. Some days when we look around our world, its darkness and its shadows, we simply cannot imagine a day of glory that the scriptures speak to us of. And yet that is the meaning of Hope.

Maranatha, come Lord Jesus, come and make the wastelands blossom and you come and let the desert sing for joy.

Bishop David Oakley
Bishop of Northampton
December 3, 2023
Sincerely,
Bishop David Oakley
Bishop of Northampton

Pope Francis teaching us about prayer

St Luke tells us the story of the ten lepers healed by Jesus (*Luke 17:11-19*), but only one came back to thank him. There are some who take every gift as somehow their 'right'; others for whom every gift is a grace given to them. The Catechism says: "every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving" (§ 2638). We were thought of before we learned how to think; we were loved before we learned how to love; we were desired before our hearts conceived a desire. If we

view life like this, then "thank you" becomes the driving force of our day. And yet how often we forget to say, "thank you".

Thanksgiving is the name given to the most essential Sacrament: Eucharist. As Christians we are people of thanksgiving; joyfully giving thanks to God for his gifts and graces. The world needs hope. And with gratitude, with this attitude of thanksgiving, we transmit a bit of hope.