



# 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

## Good-bye, 2020; Welcome 2021

Looking back over 2020, most people will not be sorry to be saying “Good-bye” to the year. There is a tradition of singing the “Te Deum” as a thanksgiving for the blessings of the past year. In the midst of the pandemic, the blessings of the year may not be at the front of our field of view.

However, there have been many blessings in spite of the tragedies and difficulties. Chief amongst those blessings is the wonderful examples of charity and self-sacrifice that we have seen, and even more, those unseen and unrecognised acts of kindness which are known only to God and to those immediately involved.

We have seen a recognition that some of the least-rewarded in our society; the lowest-paid in the NHS, the delivery-drivers; those who collect our rubbish and recycling and amongst the most valuable in our society. Sadly it is doubtful whether they will be better rewarded in monetary terms when the crisis is ended.

It remains a hope that we will have learned from the experience of the pandemic and that the ‘new normal’ might be a better world than the old. However, the saying that ‘the one lesson of history is that we don’t learn the lesson of history’ remains sadly true.

The tradition of singing a “Te Deum” to give thanks for the blessings of the past year is linked to singing “Veni, Creator Spiritus” on New Year’s Day, asking God’s blessing on the coming year.

Later in this newsletter will be information about things in the coming year; this must inevitably be somewhat provisional as we have no idea how long the restrictions of the pandemic will continue. What has happened in the past year is more certain.

We may first want to give thanks for the fact that we have survived the year, and for those who have fallen victim to COVID-19 that they have recovered. For them, there will also be special thanksgiving for the health service, and for those who cared for them in their sickness.

Those who have been (and still are) shielding will be giving thanks for those who have been shopping and making sure that they have all that they need.

In truth, however ghastly 2020 has been, we all do have things to be thankful for.

The words of the “Te Deum” in the next column are attributed to Saints Ambrose and Augustine, and suggested as a spontaneous act of praise following the baptism of Augustine by Ambrose in Milan at the Easter Vigil in the year 387. It is best-known in English as the basis of the hymn “Holy God, we praise thy name”. We could make this our thanksgiving for 2020.

### Te Deum Laudamus

We praise you, O God: we acclaim you as the Lord.  
Everlasting Father, all the world bows down before you.

All the angels sing your praise,  
the hosts of heaven and all the angelic powers,  
all the cherubim and seraphim call out to you in unending song:  
*Holy, Holy, Holy,*  
*is the Lord God of angel hosts!*

The heavens and the earth are filled with your majesty and glory.  
The glorious band of apostles, the noble company of prophets,  
the white-robed army who shed their blood for Christ,  
all sing your praise.

And to the ends of the earth your holy Church  
proclaims her faith in you:  
Father, whose majesty is boundless,  
your true and only Son, who is to be adored,  
the Holy Spirit sent to be our Advocate.

You, Christ, are the king of glory, Son of the eternal Father.  
When you took our nature to save mankind  
you did not shrink from birth in the Virgin’s womb.

You overcame the power of death  
opening the Father’s kingdom to all who believe in you.

Enthroned at God’s right hand in the glory of the Father,  
you will come in judgement according to your promise.

You redeemed your people by your precious blood.  
Come, we implore you, to our aid.  
Grant us with the saints a place in eternal glory.

Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.  
Rule them and uphold them for ever and ever.

Day by day we praise you:  
we acclaim you now and to all eternity.

In your goodness, Lord, keep us free from sin.  
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

May your mercy always be with us, Lord,  
for we have hoped in you.

In you, Lord, we put our trust:  
we shall not be put to shame.



# Notices of Interest

**Happy New Year** to everyone in the Parish from me. Thank you for being so understanding with my many mistakes! Caryll

**LUX.VALOUR Weekend:** On Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st January 2021, we can all come together **online** for **LUX.Valour!** During our LUX.Valour weekend, we will be exploring what it means to be a young person of great bravery. How we can walk into the unknown of this New Year, confident that we are “not given a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power.” 2 Timothy 1:7.  
<https://nymo.org/lux-valour/>

**Repository:** Despite the difficulties this year we have managed to donate some funds to our charities, the Hope Centre and our own Parish help for those in need. The amounts have had to be reduced, but perhaps conditions will improve in 2021. Once again a great vote of thanks to our customers and especially to the small but loyal band of helpers. Anyone wishes to volunteer help after services when normality returns would be very welcome. At the moment, goods can be looked at with the help of the stewards as before. Kathleen Healey

**SPUC - Prayer Group; Help us save the lives of unborn children:** SPUC Northampton is actively looking for people to join the local branch. We meet every few weeks in order to plan & arrange pro-life initiatives. This is a personal invitation for you to join us. We promise that there will be no pressure to do anything you are not comfortable with. If you are unable to join the branch how would you feel about being part of our prayer team? We are looking for people to form a prayer team who will support us through prayer on an ongoing basis & on special occasions. All we ask is that you spend some time in prayer in support of our pro-life work. This can be done in the comfort of your own home or with others in the group. If you would like to join the branch or join the prayer group please contact William on 07393965643 (text is fine) or [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com). Prayer is a very powerful weapon in the fight to save our unborn children and we beseech Our Lady of Guadalupe to intercede for us in this battle.

**COVID-19 Precautions** We will be in ‘tier 3’, & 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.

**Bible Alive** for January 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.

**St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.** If you have a child due to start primary school in September 2021, St Gregory's are welcoming parents to visit the school and see it in action. Contact 01604 403511 to arrange a visit. Closing date for place applications is 15th January 2021 at 5pm.

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

**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/>

**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.

**Second Collections 2021:** Please see the poster in the porch for next year's second collections.

**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.

**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:** The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, at 7pm in the Sacristy.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at [swatts49@outlook.com](mailto: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!

**Parish Finances:** As colder weather is here & have the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent through 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)**

## Walking towards Eternity

Starting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January at 3.00 pm there will be a series of Zoom sessions on aspects of living the Christian life. The first is on hearing the voice of God. One way in which God speaks to us today is through our reading of the Scriptures. Last year had been designated as a “Year of the Word”, and thanks to COVID-19 this has been extended into this year. Through Bible study we can learn much about the Scriptures, but only when we read prayerfully can we truly hear God speaking to us through the words of the Bible.

To join the Zoom meeting you will need the link which is included with the email version of the newsletter. Those who read this on the web-site or in print are asked to send an email to Fr Andrew, and you will be sent the link in time for the session.

If you have never used Zoom before, please give it a go! It is a good way of getting human companionship in these difficult times, and the session will help you spiritually.

# Scripture Readings 3rd January 2021, 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Written in Jerusalem about 180 BC, Sirach contains many carefully worded maxims, and has been much used by the Church to present moral teaching. This chapter personifies Wisdom as a distinct being who comes from God, so foreshadowing the Gospel of John. Here Wisdom is seen as God's gift to Israel, where she is to dwell.

The Psalm urges us to praise the Lord because of all his good deeds to us, giving us life, food, children, and laws to live by.

After a short greeting Paul reminds his hearers of God's plan, that mankind was designed from the beginning to be with him in eternal glory through Jesus Christ. After giving thanks for our redemption through Christ's blood, Paul prays that God "may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him", so that you

may know what hope we may have in God's power which he worked in raising Christ from the dead. Our baptism is only the first instalment of the renewal of all creation under Christ.

John's prologue to his gospel appears to be a hymn praising God's activity in creating the world and sending the "logos" or "Word", who dwells among us and shows God's glory. The three interruptions describe the role of John the Baptist, who testified to the light. Those who accept the light, Christ, are given power to become children of God.

Psalm Response: **The Word was made flesh and lived among us.**

*(Sirach/Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2, 8-12; Psalm 147; Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18; John 1:1-18)*

## Scripture Readings 6th January 2021, The Epiphany of the Lord, Year B

Third Isaiah was writing after the Israelites had returned from exile in Babylon. Future messianic salvation is offered to all who believe in the Lord and keep his commandments. All peoples will stream to the new Jerusalem with acceptable offerings.

The Psalm offers good wishes to a king, perhaps at a coronation. But the king is so idealised that only the Messiah could match these expectations.

The vision of the universal Church Paul describes in Ephesians matches Isaiah's image of the new Jerusalem. The Church, Christ's body, led by the Spirit, is part of God's plan for the whole of creation. Paul joyfully realises that taking the gospel message to all was always part of God's plan: Gentiles as well as Jews are to share equally in the inheritance promised by God.

In Luke's Gospel an angel announced Jesus' birth to poor Jewish shepherds, excluded by their occupation from Temple worship. Today we hear Matthew's description of Gentile scholars travelling from afar to bring kingly offerings to the new-born child. God's plan is already being made known beyond Israel. But the scholars needed the Jewish scriptures to help find Jesus. We too need the Old Testament to help us understand God's plan and what he has done in Jesus for our salvation.

Psalm Response: **All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.**

*(Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 71(72); Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6; Matthew 2:1-12)*

*Chris Oliver*

## LOOKING FORWARD INTO 2021 (Continued from front page)

The prayer for New Year is one asking the Holy Spirit to guide us through the coming year.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come  
from thy bright heav'nly throne;  
come, take possession of our souls,  
and make them all thine own.

Thou who art called the Paraclete,  
best gift of God above,  
the living spring, the living fire,  
sweet unction and true love.

Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace,  
finger of God's right hand;  
his promise, teaching little ones  
to speak and understand.

O guide our minds with thy blest light,  
with love our hearts inflame;  
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays,  
confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our deadly foe;  
true peace unto us bring;  
and through all perils lead us safe  
beneath thy sacred wing.

Through thee may we the Father know,  
through thee th'eternal Son,  
and thee the Spirit of them both,  
thrice-blessed three in One

Many will know the words of Minnie Louise Haskins which was quoted by King George VI in his Christmas broadcast in 1939, suggested to him by his then 13-year old daughter, now Queen Elizabeth II. They come from a poem entitled 'God Knows', published in 1908 within a book entitled "The Desert".

"And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East."

Both the traditional hymn and the poem reflect a deep personal relationship with God. For us, this relationship is one which is nourished by our receiving the Blessed Sacrament and being able to attend Mass. As we begin this New Year, we pray for those who are shielding and cannot receive this nourishment, and whose spiritual life must be sustained in other ways.

They are also cut off from much human companionship, and this is now recognised as being seriously bad for us. God realised at the beginning of creation that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (*Genesis 2:18*), and we are thankful for the provision of digital technology, allowing for the transmission of Mass through the internet. While this cannot make up for what is lost, it can provide some sort of company. One of these technologies is called 'Zoom', and it has been as blessing to many organisations; not least, to the Church. Zoom is free to the user, and not enormously complicated. If you receive a zoom link, simply click on it and follow the instructions on your screen. It works on computers, tablets and most smartphones (although the smartphone screen is rather small).

Starting on **Monday January 11<sup>th</sup> at 3.00 pm** there will be a series of Zoom meetings, watching a video and talking about it. The theme is simply living the Christian life; it is entitled "Walking towards Eternity", and the video presentation is by Jeff Cavins who leads the Bible Timeline courses. However, this is not high-powered study; and is suitable for everyone.

On **Tuesday 19 January 2021**, (7.30-8.30 pm) there will be an on-line presentation: 'He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures' (*Luke 24:45*) on the importance of God's Word for Christian identity & everyday living, led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, and Alex Heath.