



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

Spiritual Communion

When those of us who are now old were children, during catechism we were often told about “spiritual communion”. They told us that we could unite ourselves spiritually to Jesus who offers Himself upon the altar, even if we were not able to make a sacramental communion by receiving physically the consecrated Host.

“Spiritual communion” was a religious practice that aimed at making us feel continuously united to Jesus, not only when we received Communion during Mass, but also at other times and places. It was not an alternative to sacramental Communion, but in a certain sense continued and prepared for it, for example during visits to the Blessed Sacrament or at other times of prayer.

But after a certain point in time, we heard practically nothing more about it – for decades. The emphasis on participation at Mass by receiving Communion, which is certainly good in itself, had led to other traditional dimensions of Christian devotion being overshadowed.

I began to think again, more intensely, about “spiritual Communion” on one exceptional occasion. During World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011, a sudden storm during the night destroyed most of the tents where the unconsecrated hosts were being prepared in anticipation of the more than two million young people expected for the final Mass. And so, at the main Mass celebrated by the Pope, only a very few of the young people were able to receive sacramental Communion, precisely because there were so few Hosts.

Many people were upset, at least at first. It seemed to some as if World Youth Day had failed, because something essential was missing from the culminating religious moment of the event. It took a lot of time and energy to help people understand that, although the physical act of receiving the Sacred Host is exceptionally important, it is not the only, indispensable manner of being united with Jesus and His Body, the Church.

Now, during his morning Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis encourages the faithful who pray with him, without being physically present, to make a “spiritual Communion”. He does so by proposing one of the traditional formulas that for a long time had been taught by the good spiritual masters of the Christian

people: formulas that were familiar to many of our mothers and grandmothers, those who got up early in the morning, sometimes every day, to go to Mass – but who also knew how to remain in union with God, in their own way, in the midst of their daily occupations.

Among the memories from the time of my catechism, I am reminded of a holy card with a little picture of a priest raising the consecrated Host in his hands. Around the image, like the hours on a clock, there were the morning hours of different countries and continents where priests would be celebrating Mass. (At the time, Mass was only celebrated in the morning!) It was meant to remind us that the Sacrifice of Jesus, Who died for us, was being continually renewed around the world, and that we could always unite ourselves spiritually with Him and His oblation.

“Spiritual Communion”, when one cannot receive sacramental Communion, can also be called “Communion of desire”: desiring that one’s own life be united to Jesus, and especially to His Sacrifice for us upon the Cross.

In this prolonged time of Eucharistic fasting that is forced upon us, many people who are accustomed to frequent sacramental Communion are increasingly feeling the lack of the “daily Bread” of the Eucharist. In a truly exceptional way, it has been the Church herself who accepted the burden of imposing this fast on the faithful, as a sign of solidarity and participation in the concerns of entire populations forced into restrictions, privations, and suffering because of the pandemic.

Fasting is a deprivation, but it can also be a time of growth. Just as the love of spouses who have long been distant from each other on account of *force majeure* can lead to growth in fidelity and purity, so too Eucharistic fasting can become a time of growth: growth in faith, growth in desire for the gift of sacramental Communion, growth in solidarity with those who for whatever reason cannot benefit from it, growth in freedom from habits of carelessness in receiving... To come to understand anew that the Eucharist is a gratuitous and surprising gift of the Lord Jesus, neither trivial nor banal... to desire it with all one’s heart... continually... Can this also be a consequence of these disturbing times?

Fr Federico Lombardi SJ



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Website: www.stgregory.org.uk

3rd May 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Parish Mass Book - Year A

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Priest:

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Deacons:

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Please note that no public celebrations of Mass are permitted during the present Coronavirus outbreak. Mass is available on the Parish website, and on the parish Facebook page (StGregsNorthampton).

Sunday <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i>	9.00 am	Mass	Dec'd Members of the Moan Family & The Parish
Monday The English Martyrs	9.00 am	Mass	Mary Fable RIP
Tuesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Von Tyrell RIP
Wednesday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Mai Kneaffey RIP
Thursday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Julie Moriarty RIP
Friday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Donna Byrne
Saturday Feria	9.00 am	Mass	Maggie & Philip Ndekwe & Family's Intentions
Sunday <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	9.00 am	Mass	Maureen Gray RIP & the Parish

Your Offering To The Parish:

Offerings will be published when figures are known.

Standing Order gifts to the Parish:

Each week £390 is given through standing orders.

Gift Aid benefits to the parish:

The value of Gift Aid averages £133 per week.

Special Collection through Lent:

CAFOD. To be reported here shortly.

Cleaners This Week:

There is no Church cleaning at the moment.

Readings for this Sunday

God has made him both Lord and Christ

You have come back to the shepherd of your souls.

I am the gate of the sheepfold.

Acts 2: 14, 36-41.

1 Peter 2: 20-25.

John 10: 1-10.

Readings for next Sunday

Acts 6: 1-7; 1 Peter 2: 4-9; John 14: 1-12. (Page 145)

During this season

New Members of the Church; Human Work;

of Easter We are

Priestly Vocations;

Asked to pray for

Right Use of the Media; The Church.

Are you new to the Parish? You are welcome!

Please introduce yourself to the Clergy

In hospital? Let the Chaplaincy know on 01604 714556

If you are in need, please ring Gregory Care on 07982 235379.

Someone will respond as soon as possible. Please be patient.

An important message from the Diocese on parish finances:

We are extremely grateful to all those who have offered support to our diocese over the last two months in a variety of ways, through time, prayer and finance. We would like you to know that if you can no longer afford to give, please feel free to change your giving practices to suit your current situation.

For those who can give the same or perhaps more, we would be extremely grateful, especially at this time of need.

We have received many enquiries from people asking how they can continue to give to their local parish.

To simplify the process, we have now introduced '**Giving Tuesday**'. Each Tuesday between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm, a member of our team will be available by phone for you to donate to your parish community over the telephone. To donate simply call 01604 712065 with your debit or credit card close by.

Once again, thank you very much we really appreciate everything you are doing at this time.

Please pray for the sick:

Anniversaries:**May they Rest in Peace**

Herbert Ainge	Reginald Neale
Rose Cosgrove	Margaret Costello
Catherine Bullock	Bernie Kavanagh
Alfred Byrne	Margaret Meagher
Jean Walsh	Carmela Gutilla
John Hylands	Daniel Magill
Thomas Donnelly	Edwin Sellars
Anthony O'Neill	Christina Port
Mary Daly	Agnes Head
Ian McRobbie	Michael Ruddy
David Pullen	Hilda Denton
Bridget Brosman	Harry Lane
Ann Ansell	Gerald Wisener
Ann Whittaker	John Roberts
James Smith	Ellen Brittain
William Weston	Samuel Howerd
Eileen Lillyman	Michael Quigley
Michal O'Hara	Mary Moan
Bryan Slinn	Doreen Harding
William Flynn	Patrick Walsh
Douglas Carter	

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS**FOR MAY**

We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

An act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment

receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Notices of Interest

An Important Notice Regarding the Celebration of Mass:

We are instructed that there will be no public Masses during the present crisis; however, Mass will continue to be said daily and this will be on the parish website and our parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregsNorthampton>.

We have had to close the Church, although this will not affect the Mass being said privately by Fr. Andrew. Please do consider making your donations via one of the links below, remembering to state the Parish name of St. Gregory the Great, Northampton.

Parish Finances

Many thanks to everyone who is continuing to support the parish financially during these difficult times.

While we are not in danger of bankruptcy, inevitably our income has greatly reduced. New envelopes have been delivered to most of those who use them. Some who have received new envelopes have transferred to standing orders; if so, thank you and please recycle your envelopes in any way you can. Thank you too to those who are putting envelopes through the presbytery letter-box. If you cannot do this, please save them for the great day when we can all meet again in church!

Online Donation: The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

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)

Hope Centre: The needs of the homeless are not changed during this emergency. Please see the Hope Centre website <https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/> to make continued donations.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: The regular Thursday adoration is not taking place during this present emergency.

Bible Alive for Easter is now available. It has daily readings & good articles - all for only £2:50! If you want to purchase a copy, they are on a table outside the fire door to the foyer during the daytime, with a box of (out of date) green envelopes. You can put the payment in an envelope and post it through the presbytery door.

The Office: A slight change! I am now trying to work from home as much as possible (Mondays & Wednesdays), but I can still access my emails, so if you need to speak to me please do email me at secretary@stgregory.org.uk. If you need to speak to me by phone, I will be trying to get to the office on Fridays, so if it isn't urgent please leave a message. If you'd rather speak to me by phone, please email me with your phone number & I'll phone you back. Don't worry, any personal details (ie your phone no.) will be deleted as soon as I've phoned you back! If it's urgent, please speak to Fr. Andrew by choosing option 2 or 3.

God bless and stay safe. *Caryl*

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Vianney Mission Prayer Group will not meet during this time.

Becoming a Catholic: For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

Forthcoming Alpha Course: The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21st. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: Please contact Deacon Michael direct (01604) 647750, E-mail: mvf@btinternet.com for information.

First Holy Communion — 2020: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

Confirmation - 3rd Preparation Session: The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 30th October.

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

Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

Live-stream Mass from Lourdes
https://www.directfromlourdes.com/lourdes_live_tv

Readings, homily and Spiritual Communion
<https://www.lentinisolation.com/videos>

EWTN
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

On participating in Mass on-line or through television

For most of us, it is a new experience to participate in Mass over the internet or on television. It is important not to be in the mindset of simply "watching television" or "watching a film". The Church as always asked for "active participation", and the medium of television make this quite difficult.

It is better if you can avoid sitting in an armchair or on a sofa, and try to adopt the same postures as you would in church (sitting, standing or kneeling), and to speak the responses; please do not simply be a viewer. On the second page of this newsletter is a simple prayer of Spiritual Communion.

Scripture Readings 3rd May 2020, 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

The Season of Creation

Tip No. 55: Solidarity with the poor: *Mother Teresa reminds us that repairing items and buying things of cheaper quality are ways of keeping up the spirit of poverty; which Jesus chose..*

Tip No. 54: Solidarity with the poor: *Cauliflower! don't throw the green leaves away – use them as cabbage either cooked or in salad..*

Actions to LiveSimply : **Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype.**

Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew

Pope Francis writes to the whole Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Francis

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.



**During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible.
The Easter “Bible Alive” is available — see the note elsewhere in this
newsletter.**

