



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.”**

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VISION

It's our Anniversary!

13 years ago on 3rd September Bishop Leo McCartie came to consecrate our church, 50 years after it was first opened and blessed by his predecessor, Bishop Leo Parker.

In the 63 years that this building has been here, there have been great changes, both in the Church and in our community. It is good, from time to time to look back over the past.

Our vision is that we should be a ‘thriving Catholic community confidently and humbly proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ’. In the light of this vision, we can examine our blessings, see where we can improve and look to the future in hope and faith

Count your Blessings

The history of the parish recounts many blessings; the faithful priests, religious sisters and lay-people who have worked here. There were those who had the vision to establish a mission in East Northampton (long before the ‘Eastern Development’ had been thought of) when Booth Lane marked the end of the town. The previous plan, which was to build a church on Wellingborough Road was changed as development grew east of Park Avenue. Sainsbury’s now stands where the church was to be built, and an allotment site on the corner of Park Avenue North and Birchfield Road East was purchased. Initially a second-hand wooden ex-American army hut was bought and put up where the car-park now is. The parish of St Gregory’s was established on 27th September 1947.

The original plan was that we would be the parish under the patronage of St Joseph, but there was already a chapel of St Joseph in Northampton, (the chapel of the Notre Dame convent school) and Bishop Parker wanted a church under the patronage of St Gregory, the Pope who first encouraged the evangelisation of Britain.

As the parish with the responsibility for the mission in Abington, we were to have the heavenly patronage of the saint who began the mission to England. How blessed are we! Our mission in the 21st century has the benefit of the prayers of the saint who began the mission fifteen centuries ago.

The first Parish Priest, Fr Eric Phillips, together with a loyal band of lay-people built up the life of the parish, and within a very short space of time the wooden hut became too small, and plans were made for the building of a permanent church at the front of the site.

Ours is not the first St Gregory’s Church in Northampton. In medieval times there was a church of St Gregory in Marefair, very close to St Peter’s church, which still stands.

There is a planned talk on the original St Gregory’s church on Tuesday evening 12th September. It will be available to hear afterwards through the ‘Friends of St Peter’s’ website: fostp.org.uk

Our St Gregory’s was opened and blessed on 11th February 1954. It was originally planned that once the permanent church was built, the wooden hut should be demolished and the church extended. Hence the east wall was intended to be temporary, and is built with less good bricks than the rest of the church. However, increasing building costs made this difficult, and Northampton continued growing eastwards so the decision was made, rather than enlarging St Gregory’s, to build a new church at Weston Favell. A particular blessing of this is that we have a small car-park. Had the church been enlarged, this would not have been possible.

Much more history of the church and parish is contained in the printed book on sale at the repository. It records that Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-83), the renowned architectural historian, visiting St. Gregory’s around 1960, was rather unkind in saying the interior was “unsuccessfully eclectic”. He believed that the merit of the building lay in its beauty. However there is another measure which is to do with homeliness and welcome. There are ‘Ideal Homes’, where nothing is out of place and you dare not sit down lest you un-plump a cushion. Churches are not like that! Everything in St Gregory’s has a story, it is there because someone has given it; it is in memory of someone or some event or has some function. The beauty lies in the love of the people of St Gregory’s, past and present, who have made it and continue to make it a house of prayer and the home of the community who meet here for Mass week by week and day by day.

Looking to the future

Our vision statement is an aspiration, and we recognise that we have not yet fully realised it. We need to respond better to the call of Pope Francis that we be a ‘Missionary Parish’ because ‘thriving’ means growing, and while we are maintaining stability, that is less than what is needed for growth.

For us to be confidently proclaiming the Good News there is a need for more and better ongoing faith-formation. We need to restore the opportunities for Bible Study and adult faith formation. For too long the Church failed to recognise this need, while putting a lot of emphasis on children’s Sacramental preparation, providing little or no continuing development apart from in our teacher training colleges.

We need to grow in our prayer-life. In the years following the Second Vatican Council many traditional devotions were dismissed as ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘out of date’ (in spite of the actual teaching of the council (for example, Eucharisticum Mysterium, Chapter III). It would be wonderful to restore the weekly Thursday adoration to the full day.

May our future be as richly blessed as our past has been, and
Happy Anniversary to all our parish and friends.

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: 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!
Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.

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

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.

Tots @ St Gregory's: Our last session this term was on Tuesday 18th July. We start again on Tuesday 12th September at 9:30.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday evening, 25th September at 7.00 pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Enrolment for 2024 will be Sunday 8th Oct. after the 11am Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered & their parents at the 11am Mass on Sunday 5th Nov. All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates and times will be available at the registration. Please see the separate article on the way the programme works.

Confirmation in 2023: Confirmation sessions will resume in September, and those enrolled will be receiving an email with details.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Alpha in the Autumn: The sessions will start in September, and will be an 'on-line' course through Zoom. However, so that those on the course can meet face-to-face, there will be a welcome session the week before the official start, on Tuesday 12th September in the Hall at 7.00 pm. Please register at www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha and the zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session. For any who live far away, we are sorry if you are unable to get to the 'face-to-face' session on 12th September, please do not let this put you off joining the course.

Parish Finances: At the end of the first quarter of the financial year (April to June) our finances have been fairly stable – we have had a small surplus of £317.35. 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)**

The Feast of St Gregory and the Anniversary of our Consecration
Many thanks to everyone who helped to make Friday evening the joyous occasion that it was.

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.

Dog lovers wanted! Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk

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.

Mission Northampton are running an on-line course on the letter of James entitled "Discerning God's Will". It will help you to understand this letter, and help in discerning every day and learn how, in the daily choices that we have to make, how to discern the will of God. Behind this is how we hear the voice of God in our daily life. The course will run on Wednesday evenings on Zoom beginning on September 13th, 7.30 to 9.00 pm— to sign up: <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/james-discerning-gods-will-autumn-2023/>

Fewer Electrical Hazards: Our statutory fixed wiring test, which was overdue thanks to the pandemic showed up a number of issues, none of immediate danger, but some areas of non-compliance with the latest regulations. While doing this it seems sensible to update the lighting to the latest LED lamps which will significantly reduce our electricity consumption and therefore our carbon footprint, particularly in the winter. The lights in the side aisles and at Our Lady's shrine have already been changed, as have those at the front of the nave. The rest will be done soon. There is now a new board with circuit breakers for the hall, kitchen and sacristy, meeting the current requirements. Part of safeguarding is to ensure that in every respect the church is as safe as possible for all who come here.

Fire Safety — Important notice. We have had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burn 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 happened recently, and must not continue.

Refreshment Donations: From now until the Harvest collection on Sunday October 8th refreshment donations after Sunday Mass and on Wednesday mornings is given to CAFOD. 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
After harvest until the beginning of Advent:	The Bible Society

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 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

3rd September 2023, Anniversary of the Consecration

Ezekiel was deported to Babylon with the Jews in 598 BC. He explained the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple as God's punishment for his people, and predicted a new day and a new temple for Israel. Today we hear about the extensive supply of life-giving water that will pour from this new temple, enough even to make the Dead Sea fresh enough for fish.

The psalm is a hymn of victory: we trust in the Lord, he will protect us in his city.

The Jews believed God dwelt in the temple in Jerusalem. But, writing from Ephesus around AD 54, Paul tells the Corinthians that "you are God's sanctuary" since "God's Spirit dwells in you". They are being built into "God's holy temple". They should stop quarrelling among themselves and be a community united in loving service. Sowing dissension damages God's temple and

will be punished.

Near the beginning of John's gospel, after the disciples are chosen and the marriage at Cana, Jesus proclaims his mission by cleansing the Jerusalem temple. The temple had become a business, in which those in religious authority profited from the spiritual needs of the people. His Father's house should not be misused: trade and power have no place in it.

Psalm Response: **The waters of a river give joy to God's city, the holy place where the Most High dwells.**

Ezek 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Ps 45(46); 1 Cor 3:9-11, 16-17; Jn 2:13-22

Chris Oliver

Thank you for your generosity

We aim not to run at a deficit, and thanks to your generosity, we have shown a small surplus for the three months from April to June. This is important for us as a parish, but it is also important for the diocese, to help recover the finances of the collective parishes.

Even before lockdown, Diocesan reserves were very low, and coming out of the pandemic the situation is even more extreme, and parishes have needed to increase their contributions.

The Three Bees — The sign of the welcoming Church



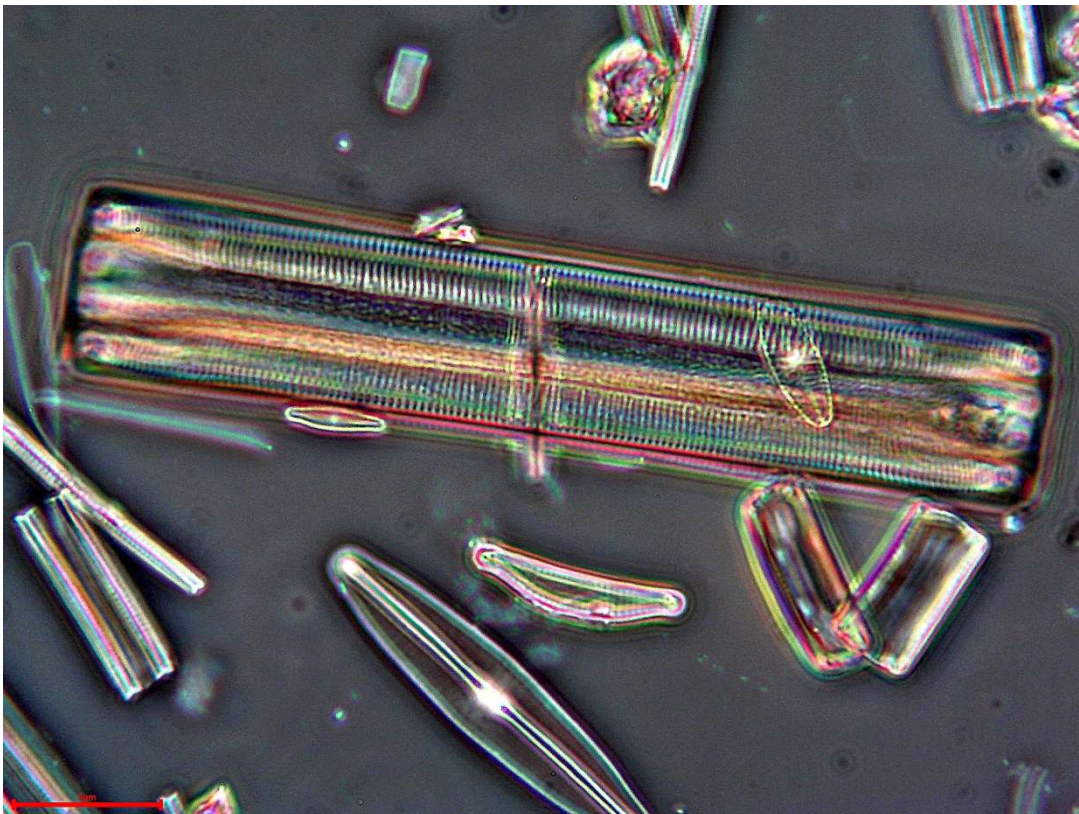
Belong Believe Behave

Our ministry of welcome helps people to feel that they belong, and belonging to the community of faith helps us all to grow in faith and come closer to God. In faith, we seek to make our lifestyle and behaviour accord with the teaching of God.

The Season of Creation

The 'Season of Creation' begins on 1st September, and continues until the feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4th October.

Each week through the 'Season of Creation' there will be a microscope photograph in the newsletter taken by Mike Gibson, together with a description of the subject. We are blessed with wonderful nature programmes on television and Mike's pictures are offered to show a different view of God's wonderful work of creation. There is a beauty in these tiny pieces of creation; there is also a reason for their existence; they form part of our ecosystem, with a vital function in some way supporting the world we can see with the naked eye.



Diatoms - nature's jewels- are in fact tiny plants found almost everywhere in seas, rivers, lakes, and ponds; so abundant they can even be seen as ocean blooms from space. However, being so small, they can only be observed individually with the aid of a microscope as shown in this picture taken of some found in the River Nene, close to the university. Diatoms belong to a group of plants known as algae and are important not only in carbon capture, but also producing almost 30% of the world's oxygen we breathe! One last interesting fact is that Victorian microscopists started a craze that continues to this day for collecting and making slides of diatoms in order to study and marvel at their intricate transparent outer silica shell structures as shown in this picture.

Mike Gibson FRMS