



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

The Vineyard in Scripture

This is the third Sunday in a row where the Gospel has been a parable relating to a vineyard. This is an image rich in Old Testament imagery. Indeed, the psalm for this week speaks of Israel as God's vine and the Promised Land as the vineyard.

Seeing where this Gospel story fits in to the context of the Gospel timeline, we are in Holy Week. Jesus has entered the city and has turned out the money-changers from the Temple. The following day he returns to the Temple and the chief priests and elders of the Temple challenge him, asking him what is his authority for what he has done and what he is saying. He responds by telling two vineyard parables; the one we read last week and then today's. After hearing this parable, St Matthew says: "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet." (*Matthew 21:45-46*)

We are then faced with the question: who are the new tenants of the vineyard? The clear answer lies in last Sunday's Gospel; it is those who actually work in the vineyard, and we can draw from next Sunday's Gospel, it is those who accept the invitation the Wedding Feast. It is not a big leap to see that the Church; the community that Jesus founded are the prime workers in the vineyard.

The vineyard itself needs also to be seen in a bigger context than the geographical area which the Jewish people considered as the Promised Land. In the psalms we read: "The earth he has given to humanity" (*Psalms 115:16*).

The important Papal Apostolic Exhortation, "Christifideles Laici" from Pope St John Paul II says:

"It is necessary, then, to keep a watchful eye on this our world, with its problems and values, its unrest and hopes, its defeats and triumphs: a world whose economic, social, political and cultural affairs pose problems and grave difficulties in light of the description provided by the Council in the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*. **This**, then, is the vineyard; **this** is the field in which the faithful are called to fulfil their mission. Jesus wants them, as he wants all his disciples, to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (cf. *Mt 5:13-14*). But what is the **actual state of affairs** of the "earth" and the "world", for which Christians ought to be "salt" and "light"?" (*Christifideles Laici §3*)

This is not a post-CoVid or post-lockdown mission; it is a permanent mission, and it is a mission for **all** Christians.

Pope St John Paul II referred to *Gaudium et Spes*, one of the foundational documents of the Second Vatican Council, and there we find:

"Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.

To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics." (*Gaudium et Spes §3-4*)

With this in mind, last week's webinar on the "Post-lockdown Church" by Brenden Thompson was entitled "Mission in a Digital Age", and considered how we can use new technology to help proclaim the Gospel message.

However, he also gave a serious warning against some of the "Catholic" websites, particularly from America, which are "so Catholic that they are hardly Christian".

He made the comparison with the early missionaries to the 'New World', offering the Gospel to people whose language they barely understood. The simple message of Jesus Christ, the message of love and service is what they (and we) want to communicate. This can be done using every technology and is not dependent on that technology, but rather on the person who is communicating. All too often 'social media' is used to convey hatred or belittling others; the 'internet trolls' and other malign voices are all too prevalent. The voice of Christ, the voice of calm, the voice of peace, the voice of love must be heard, and whatever the technology, the message of love must be heard. This can be on Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, YouTube; or on the telephone or even face to face.

We are called to be workers in the Vineyard, and we are already here. We are not standing in the market-place; we are in the Vineyard already! Each one of us is called to be a worker in that Vineyard, and there are a variety of viticultural tools at our disposal. We must be willing to use those tools to produce the fruit, the New Wine of God's Kingdom.

Notices of Interest

Confession: Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Sophia-Adela Bisoc
who received Christian Baptism last week.
Please pray for her and her family.

Repository - First communion and Confirmation: I have put a small display of cards & mementoes in the Foyer. People can help themselves whenever the Church is open & put payment in the wall box on the right of the Sacristy door. A member of staff will be present after Sunday Masses. **Please remember to observe the regulations on masks & spacing. Only touch items you intend to buy. Items will be cleaned & sanitised regularly. Stay Safe.**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

From 9.00 am to 12 noon on Thursdays, and then following Mass in the evening, until 8.30 pm.

Bible Alive for October 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. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

Stella Maris Centenary Mass: Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) was founded October 1920 in Glasgow. To mark the beginning of our year we are holding a special live-streamed Mass celebrated by Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow. It is today (Sunday) at 3.00 pm. See it at stellamaris.org.uk/centenarymass

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church – Monday webinars, Pastoral Ministry Office. Week 3: This week we are very lucky to have Francis Davis, Professor of Religion, Community and Public Policy, speaking on *Making it real, a parish for the poor*. As Francis has also been involved in starting over 40 social enterprises, he's got a lot of practical knowledge to share about getting parish projects off the ground. The talk would be of interest to anyone involved in the SVP, homeless outreach or any other kind of pastoral project. Please go to <http://postlockdownchurch.eventbrite.co.uk> for more information and to register.

Track and Trace: The government have now (at last) released their smartphone app to support track and trace, and 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. For the time being we are asked to continue to fill in a paper form, but this may change when the electronic system has bedded in.

Many thanks indeed for the very kind anonymous donation of £50 for The Blessed Virgin Mary. This will be put towards flowers for Our Lady at Christmas.

Electric Organ For Sale: A friend of mine wants to dispose of an electronic organ which has two manuals over 2 octaves each, at least 30 buttons including rhythm and/or chord options and has 8 foot pedals. The make is Kawai. I had a play and found it to be in good working order. My friend would like just a donation (£50 ?). I have seen a used version of the same model using Google at £95. If interested contact Alec, organist for 11:00 Mass or phone (622153). I have photos and a video.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 19th October, 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 2020: We are happy to announce that enrolment for next year's programme for any child wishing to make their First Holy Communion who is in school year 3, 4, 5 or 6 will take place soon. The enrolment will be on line in December, so watch this space! At the moment we can't give any more details of how or when the preparation will take place but rest assured, it will!

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 21st November at 7.00 pm (Apologies for yet another change — this has been difficult!).

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

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.

PARISH FINANCES AS IT GETS COLDER

We have managed to keep financially solvent through the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous. However when we turn the heating on, the bills will vastly increase. Since the CoVid restrictions require that Mass should be a short, it would be very helpful if we can delay the beginning of the heating season, so please come with warm clothes if it is cold outside!

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)**

Holy Communion and face masks: Please note that wearing face masks is compulsory in churches, & you should wear one if you are not exempt. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is now the law. However, you clearly cannot have your mouth covered while receiving Holy Communion! The Church's rule is that you consume the Host before you move away from the minister. Please remove your mask before being given the Host. Priest and Deacon wear face-coverings for your protection.

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.

Scripture Readings 4th October 2020, 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

First Isaiah was writing before 700 BC, when Assyria threatened and eventually overwhelmed Israel, the northern kingdom. Isaiah insists that only being faithful to God will protect the nation from disaster. The unproductive vineyard is the house of Israel, where, in spite of the care lavished on it by the Lord, there is bloodshed and injustice.

The psalm beseeches the Lord to protect his vine, Israel. Transplanted from Egypt, it has been severely damaged, but Israel promises not to forsake the Lord again.

In his affectionate farewell to the Philippians, Paul urges them to "rejoice in the Lord always", not anxious, but thinking about all that is good, letting the Lord know all their needs. They should imitate Paul in the way he relies on the Lord. Then God's grace will bring

them peace. Our God is the God of peace. He not seeking to catch us out, but longs for us to accept the peace he offers and to rely on him totally.

This parable in Matthew's Gospel about a vineyard owner follows immediately after last week's story of the two sons. Matthew has brought Isaiah's tale up to date with the murder of the prophets and even the Lord's son. As with Isaiah's prophecy, Israel would again be devastated, in AD70.

Psalm Response: **The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.**

Isa 5:1-7; Ps 79(80); Phil 4:6-9; Matt 21:33-43

Chris Oliver

The Season of Creation

Technically the Season of Creation ends today with what would be the feast of St Francis of Assisi, were it not a Sunday. We have been offered these tips over the past year, and they will continue, but not so large in the newsletter. There are a few copies of all the tips on the table at the entrance of the church – or it can be sent electronically if requested.

Tip No. 102: *Actions to LiveSimply: Mother Teresa's "Simple Path" recommends building foundations on Charity, Friendship, Love, Gratitude, Kindness, Warmth and Trust.*

Tip No. 103: *Actions to LiveSimply: Be a witness to Purposefulness, Health, Joy, Self motivation, Contentment, Acceptance, Fulfilment and Creativity.*

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

CAFOD Harvest Collection and Fast Day.

Asal's story

Asal, 32, is a mum of five. She was living with her husband in Afghanistan, when he caught



coronavirus. Asal's husband died of coronavirus. This terrible virus left her two little girls and three boys without a father. Her husband was the main provider, so when he died she lost the simple comfort of knowing her children would have enough to eat each day.

No mother should have to worry about her kids getting enough to eat, especially after such a terrible loss. With your support we can be there for even more people like Asal, as they rebuild their lives.

So many families around the world are facing uncertain futures because of coronavirus. Your continued support this Harvest will help families build futures they can look forward to.

Pheng's story

Pheng lost her job in Thailand when the coronavirus pandemic began and was forced to return home to Cambodia.



Pheng was given the chance to take part in a training programme, where she will be placed in charge of organic vegetables and will train others in her community in how to increase their rice farming.

Our local experts have trained Pheng in rice farming, so she has an income to support her family. She tells us "I really love farming on my field and in my community".

What is CAFOD doing to help people like Asal and Pheng rebuild their lives?

Families in every country we work in have felt its impact. And for so many like Asal and Pheng, their lives will never be the same again.

Your support means you can stand alongside families in love and friendship as they work to build futures they can look forward to. You can help people like Asal and Pheng to not only survive, but to rebuild

their lives. Asal was determined to find a way to rebuild her life and thankfully she was not alone. She is a member of a self-help group funded by CAFOD to help women in the area build their skills and

fulfil their potential. The group will be able to give Asal the training and support she needs to start her own business.

"My only hope is the self-help group," says Asal. "I am planning to request some chickens so I can start a small poultry farm. Through that I would be able to make enough to buy food and have some income in my life."

Your support will help families around the world as they rebuild their lives.

With sorrow we record the death of David Deeprise. His body will be laid to rest in Towcester Road Cemetery. May he rest in peace.