



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

It begins with the Holy Spirit

The series of teaching on evangelisation which Pope Francis is giving at the Wednesday audiences is continuing, and on 22nd February he spoke of the primacy of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of the Gospel. However, he began by returning to a previous and important theme; the difference between evangelisation and proselytisation. He reminds us of the ‘Great Commission’, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (*Matthew 28:19*).

“Go”, says the Risen One, not to indoctrinate, not to make proselytes, no, but to *make disciples*, that is, to give everyone the opportunity to come into contact with Jesus, to know and love Him freely.

This distinction between ‘indoctrination’ and ‘making disciples’ is one which Pope Francis explores further in speaking of Baptism:

Go and *baptise*: to baptise means to immerse; and therefore, before indicating a liturgical action, it expresses a vital action: to immerse one’s life in the Father, in the Son, in the Holy Spirit; to experience every day the joy of the presence of God who is close to us as Father, as Brother, as Spirit acting in us, in our very spirit. To baptise is to immerse oneself in the Trinity.

The Gospel of Matthew ends with the ‘Great Commission’; he gives us no information as to how this was put into effect. Mark’s Gospel tells us that the apostles went out and proclaimed the message everywhere (*Mark 16:20*), but gives no time-frame for this. We need to turn to the Acts of the Apostles to see how that actually played out. Initially they stayed in the upper room “devoting themselves to prayer” (*Acts 1:14*) and then dealing with the replacement of Judas with Matthias. It was not until ten days later that something momentous happened.

The story of what happened at Pentecost is well-known. The Holy Spirit comes down on the Apostles, and they begin to speak “as the Spirit gave them ability”. (*Acts 2:4*) They are no longer afraid; they go out amongst the crowd and do what they were commanded and commissioned to do - to proclaim the Good News. This is the beginning of what will change the world.

It is the word of the Spirit, the strength of the Spirit that bears them onward to change the world. The proclamation of the Gospel, therefore, is only realized in the power of the Spirit, who precedes the missionaries and prepares hearts: He is “the engine of evangelisation”.

The book we call ‘The Acts of the Apostles’ could equally be called ‘The Acts of the Holy Spirit’, and we see throughout the book that it is the Holy Spirit who is the driving force in the proclamation of the Good News. It may be the mouth of Peter or Paul, Stephen or Philip but it is the breath of the Holy Spirit that is the instigator of the proclamation. Pope Francis invites us to consider the book of the Acts in its wholeness and see the work of the Holy Spirit in action.

He highlights an important event in the life of the early Church.

In the Book of Acts, too, a crucial moment in the beginning of the Church is recounted, which can also say a lot to us. Then, as now, tribulations were not lacking among consolations — beautiful moments and not so beautiful moments — joys were accompanied by worries, both things. One [worry] in particular: how to deal with the pagans who came to the faith, with those who did not belong to the Jewish people, for example. Were they or were they not bound to observe the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law? This was no small matter for those people. Two groups were thus formed, between those who considered the observance of the Law indispensable and those who did not. In order to discern, the Apostles gathered in what came to be called the ‘Council of Jerusalem’, the first in history. How to resolve the dilemma? They might have sought a good compromise between tradition and innovation: some rules are observed, and others are left aside. Yet the Apostles do not follow this human wisdom to seek a diplomatic balance between the one and the other; they don’t follow this, but they adapt to the work of the Spirit, who had anticipated them by descending upon the pagans as He had upon them.

And so, removing almost every obligation related to the Law, they communicate the final decisions, made — and this is what they write — by the Holy Spirit and by us (cf. *Acts 15:28*), this went out, “the Holy Spirit with us” — the Apostles always act in this way. Together, without being divided, despite having different sensitivities and opinions, they listen to the Spirit. And He teaches one thing, which is also valid today: every religious tradition is useful if it facilitates the encounter with Jesus.

Pope Francis uses this to encourage us to look at the Church today:

When decisions are found in the Church — for example ideological divisions: “I am conservative because...” “I am progressive because...”. But where is the Holy Spirit?

We must in our day seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The first council was guided by the Holy Spirit and motivated by the principle of proclamation. This must be the first priority; not whether one be ‘conservative’ or ‘progressive’ but whether Jesus is living in our life and whether our life is witnessing to the love of God.

The Spirit makes us go forth, propels us to proclaim the faith in order to confirm ourselves in the faith, pushes us to go on mission to rediscover who we are. That is why the Apostle Paul recommends: “Do not quench the Spirit” (*1 Thessalonians 5:19*). Do not quench the Spirit. Let us pray to the Spirit often, let us invoke him, let us ask him every day to kindle his light in us. Let us do this before each encounter, to become apostles of Jesus with the people we find. Don’t quench the Spirit, either in the Christian communities or in each one of us.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 22nd February 2023

Notices of Interest

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! There is now a display of St Patrick Day Cards, Easter Cards and Easter Mass Bouquet Cards. We also 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.* PS: There are still some Church Art Calendars and Diaries available.

Refreshment Donations: Through Lent and Eastertide our refreshment donations are given to CAFOD to add to the Lent Family Fast Day collection. Thank you for your support for Gregory Care. Please continue to give toiletries for the Cathedral Foodstore.

Olive wood sale: The sale of olive-wood produce from the Holy Land raised £700. The organisers are grateful for your generosity and for the warm welcome that they received. They ask for your continued prayers. Many thanks.

Matilda, the Musical: You are invited to join us at Thomas Becket Catholic School as our students perform **Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical** 15th & 16th March, 6pm. Please see poster in the Narthex for more information. Tickets can be purchased in advance from the school office.

Fairtrade Fortnight: 27th February to 12th March. We are a Fairtrade Church & use Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar & other Fairtrade products in the Parish Hall. We encourage our parishioners to support Fairtrade. Due to Climate Warming some supermarket staples are at risk of becoming scarce & their future is endangered. The producers of these products need our support. Many supermarkets at this time are rationing tomatoes, cucumbers & peppers!
"The fields of the poor may produce abundant food but injustice sweeps it away" Proverbs 13-23

Grief to Grace: Grief to Grace is a specialised 5 day residential programme of spiritual & psychological healing for anyone who has suffered sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those who are the victims of rape, incest or abuse by a member of the clergy. For details please see www.griefftograceuk.org, email info@griefftograceuk.org, contact 02081542719 or see posters in the Narthex.

Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group continues to pray together online via Skype and by telephone.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it. No one is expected to remain for the entire two hours, come for as long as you can or want to.

Stations of the Cross: Malcolm Arnold Academy students will be taking to the stage to share a moving and powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross. The performance will be at **St Gregory's Church at 6pm on Monday 27th March** (lasting approx. an hour). It is FREE to all.

Church Heating: The Church heating has to be on for two hours before it even begins to warm up, so not running it for weekday Mass is a way of making a considerable saving. Please come in warm clothing! We will heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

Fire Safety — Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned 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 & should not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

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

Encounter - Saturday 25th March 2023 Encounter enables participants to deepen their relationship with God as well as discovering a renewed desire to share their faith with others. This will take place at St Gregory's Church Hall. Please contact Maria Heath: Maria.mission@northamptondiocese.org or <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/encounter-northampton/>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be reported here shortly. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Congratulations to all children who have enrolled on the First Holy Communion programme. You will now have all the dates of sessions. Please try to attend them all, and please enjoy the course!

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

Parish Finances: 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)**

Diocesan Employment Opportunities:

1. Fundraising Manager, 40 hours per week, Start date: April 2023. We are currently recruiting for an experienced Fundraising Manager to lead the development and delivery of the diocesan fundraising plan with the principle aim of proactively securing growth of income from charitable trusts, foundations and grant giving bodies. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/job/fundraising-manager/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org

2. Diocesan Information Manager, 3 days per week, Start date: May 2023. We are currently recruiting for an Information Manager to join our Diocese. Full information for the position and an application form can be found by visiting <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/> All candidates should complete an application form and email it to hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org The closing date for applications will be Friday 31st March. Interviews dates to be confirmed.

Tots @ St Gregory's has restarted: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!

Prayers 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**

Scripture Readings 5th March 2017, 2nd Sunday of Lent, Year A

After hearing last week about the Fall, Genesis moves past the Flood and the Tower of Babel to the times of the patriarchs, probably before 1500 BC. God tells Abram to travel from Haran near the Euphrates to “a land that I will show you”. God promises that Abram’s descendants will become a great nation which will be blessed, and will take God’s blessings to other peoples. Abram trusts in God and obeys, following the age-old migration route through Palestine to Egypt.

The psalm speaks to us of complete trust in God.

In one of his last letters Paul instructs Timothy to continue proclaiming the true gospel he received from Paul, and to correct the errors that will arise from false teachers. God’s plan, made before time began, was revealed by the appearing of Jesus Christ, who has saved all humanity and abolished death. We cannot merit the grace to be holy, it is a free gift.

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus for the first time tells his disciples of his coming passion. They are then given a preview of Jesus’ glory as the Son of God. Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus, who is the correct interpreter of the Law and the Prophets. Then Jesus predicts his resurrection, after which they will understand what they have seen.

Psalm Response: **May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.**

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 32; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9

Chris Oliver

Alpha beginning on March 14th 2023

A number of people have spoken of being interested in the Alpha course, but have not yet signed up using the on-line link at: www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha. It is important that the Alpha Team have an idea of numbers as soon as possible, so if you would like to take part in this course, please sign up as soon as you can. If you prefer not to enrol on line, please speak to one of the Alpha Team who will ensure that there is a place for you. If you have any food allergies it is important that we know in advance.

First session:	March 14th 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21st 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28th 2023	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18th 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25th 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2nd 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9th 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12th/13th 2023	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16th 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23rd 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6th 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13th 2023:	What about the Church?

Gregory Care

Save the Date

Bank Holiday Monday, 8th May
from 12 noon at St Gregory’s.
Planning is in full swing for the
Coronation Big Lunch.

We hope many of you can join in this
community celebration.

More details to follow, so watch this
space.



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COMMUNITY
MINDS



CAFOD LENT FAST DAY (Last Friday)

Is **ONE DAY** the best we can do to support the work of CAFOD and the enormous number of people facing disaster through earthquake, flood, drought, exploitation — disasters from nature or from ‘man’s inhumanity to man’?

Special collection **TODAY** but
CAFOD box at the back of the
church available every day.

CAFOD BIG WALK

Kevin and Aideen Fogarty have signed up to do the Walk. We will together walk 200K in 40 days
We hope you will sponsor us in this effort. A sponsorship form will be available at the back of the Church, or you can go online to donate at <https://cafod.org.uk/give>
Thank you all so very much for your generosity!

Fairtrade Fortnight

There is one more week of Fairtrade Fortnight which runs until March 12th. We are committed to be a Fairtrade Parish; as far as possible we only buy fairly traded goods for the hall and the church. But the parish is actually the people, not simply the organisation, and these two weeks are an annual opportunity to re-assess our buying habits. With the enormous cost of living increase, it is understandable that most of us will be looking for cheaper produce, but Fairtrade is not always more expensive. We should support farmers in developing countries as well as farmers and other food producers in this country. Please look out for the Fairtrade logo when you go shopping

Gregory Care

The Cathedral Food Store and Gregory Care continue to see the hardship experienced by individuals and families as a result of the economic climate. Thankfully due to the generosity of parishioners and supporters we are able to provide the material support required. Over the past couple of weeks in addition to our weekly toiletry collections we have been very grateful to receive two substantial food donations from the Co-Op on Bushland Rd, this was arranged by a St Gregory’s parishioner who works at the shop. Gregory Care and the recipients of our service very much appreciate the kind thoughts and support of parishioners. Please remember us in your prayers & be assured you are in ours.