



# 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

## Intricately woven by the Lord:

### A pastoral reflection on Gender by the bishops of England and Wales

**The human person, intricately woven in secret, by a loving God.**

The wonder of the human person is grounded in the mystery of God who, as the psalmist relates, formed us and knows the depths of who we are. (*Ps. 139:13-15*). The image of God, shines forth in every person and is with this in mind that the Bishops offer this pastoral reflection.

Accompanying those who struggle with gender dysphoria is a complex but essential pastoral task. In every human person, regardless of how they understand their identity, the image of God shines forth. (*Evangelium vitae, §34*). Pope Francis warns against views that deny ‘the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual difference, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.’ (*Amoris laetitia, §56*).

All are welcome in the Church and, in fidelity to the example of Christ, the Church seeks always to walk respectfully, sensitively and compassionately alongside people in all the complexities of life, including people’s struggles with gender identity.

#### **Our understanding of the human person**

Rooted in Scripture (*Gen. 1:27 and 31*), four dimensions provide the starting point for our understanding: the goodness of the created order, the human person created in the image and likeness of God, the importance of the body and the importance of sexual differentiation.

The natural world is a wondrous work of the Creator (*Caritas in veritate, §48*). Human beings are created in the image of God, possessing a dignity that is given by the Creator. The Christian is called, therefore, to respect the dignity of every individual and this obliges us to avoid every sign of unjust discrimination’. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church §2358*).

The Fall and original sin leave our human nature wounded. As a result, we experience disharmony in ourselves, in our relationships with others and with creation. In this struggle and suffering, there is the light of hope, given by redemption in Jesus Christ. Those who experience discomfort relating to sex and gender, are reassured that such confusion is an expression of our common humanity. We groan with the rest of creation and long to be free (*Romans 8:23*). Wholeness is ultimately restored in each of us as we find the fullness of life in Christ. Our bodies are animated by a spiritual soul. Our whole person – body, mind and spirit – is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.’ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church §364*).

Both soul and body determine what it means to be human. The body has meaning and importance now and into eternity. This reflects the wonder of the person of Jesus, who is put to death, rises from the dead in his body and ascends to the Father. Our body and soul find harmony through the saving work of Christ. Since the body shares in the dignity of the image God and was created by God, we must regard the body as good.

Being male or female is fundamental to the understanding of the human person. There is a fundamental equality and distinctiveness in being created man or woman. This is good and willed by God. (*Gen 1:27*).

#### **Towards a genuine pastoral accompaniment**

Jesus tells us that he has come that we have life, life in all its fullness (*John. 10:10*). In pastoral accompaniment, we find confidence in these words which enable us to understand the reality of gender within its relationship with sex and sexuality. To appreciate this mystery of created life is to practise a charity which truly enables a person to experience freedom.

Pastoral accompaniment should view the other as “sacred ground”, requiring a reverence towards each person’s situation before God. Thus, we refrain from “making judgements about their responsibility and culpability.” (*Evangelii Gaudium, §172*). Whilst there are legal constraints within which many of our institutions operate, we are aware that currently the law is generous and supportive of Catholic life and mission in this particular area. The doors of the church are open to all and all should find, from all members of the Church, a welcome that is compassionate, sensitive and respectful.

Those who offer pastoral accompaniment to gender dysphoric persons should be trained in the Catholic vision and understanding of the human person and a holistic view of human sexuality. This is vital to ensure that the experiences of those struggling with gender identity are properly understood.

We cannot encourage support for reconstructive or drug based medical intervention that harms the body. Rather, our aim is to assist in the rediscovery and cherishing of humanity as created by God. This commands gentleness, respect, patience and love, for primacy always lies with the grace of Christ. The divine plan is a ‘source of objective inspiration for the deeply personal process of making decisions.’ (*Amoris laetitia, 305*).

This pastoral accompaniment requires care in the choice of language. Sensitivity and a desire to show respect are important, yet care should be taken to resist the temptation to adopt the language of gender ideology in our institutions.

Some children and young people experience gender incongruence/dysphoria. Pastoral accompaniment must flow from an acceptance and celebration of the body as created, respect for parents as primary educators and uphold best practice in terms of safeguarding principles. Medical intervention for children should not be supported. Social ‘transition’ can have a formative effect on a child’s development and this should be avoided with young children.

Following the example of the encounter of the two disciples with Jesus on the road to Emmaus (*Lk. 24:13-35*), an authentic pastoral accompaniment is one which walks alongside people with compassion, sensitivity and respect. As long and demanding as it might be, it becomes a ‘pilgrimage with Christ to the Father’. (*Evangelii gaudium, 170*). Such pastoral accompaniment is not an assertion of the self, but a recognition that we are each wonderfully made by God.

*Shortened from the executive summary of the document of the Bishops’ Conference. Full version available at:*

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2024/04/REFLECTION-Intricately-Woven-By-The-Lord.pdf>



# Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church Nieves Jacqueline Iris Eastman-Gonzalez who received Christian Baptism recently. Please pray for her and her family.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Cards and items for First Communion and Confirmation are available. Red Communion ties are here & cost £6. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

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

### Coming Events (for your diary):

Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July: 40 Hours Adoration at St Gregory's

**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)**

**Sheppard Singers:** Some of you may remember the wonderful recital that the Sheppard Singers put on for us in the Church a couple of years ago? Well, the good news is, they're back! They will be performing for us on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 pm. There is no admission charge, but a retiring collection will be made to go towards the good work of CAFOD. Please do come if you can – it will be well worth it!

### SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 pm in the Sacristy. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

**First Holy Communion 2023/4:** All sessions are on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates, times have been given to all those who are registered.

**Confirmation in 2024:** There will be practical sessions through February & March, & then teaching sessions from April. Email to [childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk) for further information.

### Next Alpha Sessions:

|                          |                              |                                      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Fourth Session:</b>   | <b>May 7<sup>th</sup>:</b>   | How can I have faith?                |
| <b>Fifth Session:</b>    | <b>May 14<sup>th</sup>:</b>  | Why and how do I pray?               |
| <b>Sixth Session:</b>    | <b>May 21<sup>st</sup>:</b>  | Why and how should I read the Bible? |
| <b>Seventh Session:</b>  | <b>June 4<sup>th</sup>:</b>  | How does God guide us?               |
| <b>Away-Day:</b>         | <b>June 8<sup>th</sup>:</b>  | Who is the Holy Spirit?              |
| <b>Eighth Session:</b>   | <b>June 11<sup>th</sup>:</b> | How can I resist evil?               |
| <b>Ninth Session:</b>    | <b>June 18<sup>th</sup>:</b> | Why and how should I tell others?    |
| <b>Tenth Session:</b>    | <b>June 25<sup>th</sup>:</b> | Does God heal today?                 |
| <b>Eleventh Session:</b> | <b>July 2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>  | What about the Church?               |

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** St Greg's Tiny Tots runs each Tuesday in term time from 9:30-11:30 in the church hall. We charge £1 per group which includes snacks & coffee! If you have care of a pre-school child, please join us!!

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10am-12 pm.

**Diocesan Music Day** Sat. 11<sup>th</sup> May 11am-3.30pm, Thomas Beckett School. For Singers & Choirs – see poster for full details.

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – 25<sup>th</sup> May**), after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

**Fire Safety:** Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe. Unlit candles **must not** be placed on the trays under the places for candles and candles must not be stacked one on top of another.

**Care for our environment:** Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1<sup>st</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>, and this has now become a celebration shared by other Christians as well. Within our own local area, it would be good if Christians could work together to try to bring about a greater understanding and respect for God's creation. Issues like clean air, fly-tipping and care of the green spaces (Abington Park, Eastfield Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Vale Park, Wilson's Orchard, Billing Road Cemetery). If anyone is interested in these, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

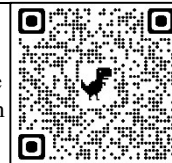
**Vacancies:** The Diocese is recruiting for a Financial Accountant & an Accounts Assistant to join their central team. For full information visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/>. Closing date Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Interview dates to be confirmed. All candidates should complete an application form & email to: [hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:hr.admin@northamptondiocese.org), together with a covering letter detailing their qualifications, experience, & why they are interested in the position.

**Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration, 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> July:** There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7am on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July until 11pm on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration.

**Choir Notes:** next practice is Saturday 4 May, 11:00-12:30. There are vacancies for new members, especially ladies. *Alec*

**SPUC, Pro Life Chain** - Thank you to the 11 intrepid souls who braved the rain & cold to stand for 2 hours on St Peter's Way on Sat, in silent witness for the babies killed by abortion since the introduction of the 1967 Abortion Act. A special thank you to Richard, 19, who travelled by train from Milton Keynes to attend. The future of the Pro-Life Movement is in the hands of young people like Richard. Please consider getting involved in the Pro-Life movement. For further info contact William on 07393965643 (text is fine). Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

**Wool for Stella Maris Woolly Hats** Thank you so much everyone for your generosity to the Stella Maris Seafarers Charity. One Chaplain recently told me that "Giving them woolly hats not only helps keep them warm, it reminds them that someone is thinking of them." God Bless and again Thank you!  
Bob <https://stellamaris.org.uk/>



**Diocesan Pilgrimages:** There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8<sup>th</sup> June (leaving 8am sharp). £20 per seat – see Caryll in the office.

### Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:         | The Hope Centre |
| From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday: | Gregory Care    |

### Through Lent and Eastertide:

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 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 |



**For Sale:** Small plaques of the church, gift-boxed, artist hand-made, a limited number available in the repository. £5 for Gregory Care.

### Prayer for Peace for Ukraine and the Holy Land:

Please continue to pray for an end to wars, and for all victims of war:  
**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**

# Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Eastertide, Year B

The readings from Easter to Pentecost from Luke's Book of Acts show Jesus continuing his ministry through the Church. The Pentecost reading will describe the visual effects of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. After Saul had left for Tarsus, Peter brought Tabitha back to life, and a vision showed him that nothing made by God is unclean. Immediately he is invited into the "unclean" house of Cornelius. While Peter hesitates, the Holy Spirit comes down on Cornelius and his household. The visual effects of this bring Peter to realise that the gospel must go to "the (Gentile) nations".

The Psalm urges all creation to praise the Lord for His victorious salvation.

The Easter season readings from John's first letter conclude with this passionate demand that we "love one another". God's love for us was revealed when He sent his Son "to be the sacrifice that takes our

sins away".

Jesus' long last supper teaching is drawing towards its climax on Pentecost Sunday, his promise to send the Advocate. Today's reading continues from last weeks' description of Jesus as the vine: we are to show that we abide in Jesus by keeping the commandments, just as Jesus has kept the Father's commandments. Jesus' commandment is that we should love one another.

Psalm Response:

**The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.**

(Acts 10: 25-26,34-35,44,48 ; Psalm 97(98):1-4 ; 1 John 4: 7-10 ; John 15: 9-17)

*Chris Oliver*

## Planning for a Fruitful 40 Hours Adoration @ St Gregory's

To help us prepare for the 40 Hours adoration (*taking place 7am Friday 19th July- 11pm Saturday 20th July 2024*) we will be having a short meeting after Mass on Wednesday morning 15th May at 9.45am onwards.

For those who would like to know more and help us to plan and organise this important 40 Hours please come for tea and coffee in the Parish Hall at **9.45am on Wednesday 15th May 2024**. We will repeat this session a little later at 10am for those who can't make it for 9.45am.



If we have a few people who are willing to do a little bit each, together we will be able to plan a successful and fruitful 40 Hours.

We look forward to seeing you there.

For those who aren't available during the day for the meeting but would like to help please contact Fr Andrew or Alex on 07963032175 so you can still be involved.

## What is 40 Hours Adoration? Why 40 Hours?

The 40 Hours devotion is the continuous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in a single place over a period of 40 hours. No one is expected to stay for the entire time, but during the 40 hours people will come in for a time of prayer, some for a short time, others for longer.

40 hours is the time that tradition records that the body of Christ rested in the tomb. 40 is a significant number in the Bible, often tied to trials and/or suffering: the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, and Christ was tempted in the desert for 40 days prior to the start of his ministry.

The practice of 40 Hours Devotion dates from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in Milan and quickly became popular – it soon became the practice that 40 Hours devotion would follow from one church to another through the city. This was established in Rome in 1592 by Pope Clement VIII. The devotion was spread by St. Ignatius and the Jesuits throughout the world through their missions. Although it fell somewhat out of fashion in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, its value is being re-discovered, and St Gregory's has had this prayer for a number of years now. This year the Cathedral is following our lead, and they have their 40 Hours in September.

## 'Tis Mary's Month of May!

Devotion to Our Lady goes back into the very early history of the Church, written into the Creeds ("born of the Virgin Mary"), defined at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The designation of May as Mary's Month begins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that it

became a widespread practice, popularised by the Jesuits as a way of calling people to faith through a joyous celebration. The crowing of a statue or icon of Our Lady goes back at least to Pope Clement VIII towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## CAFOD CRISIS APPEAL FOR SUDAN

**With the terrible and shocking news from Gaza and the West Bank as well as from Ukraine, we have not been told of other conflicts by the main-stream media. CAFOD have been working in Sudan, and are now making an appeal as the situation is urgent.**

The conflict in Sudan has created a massive crisis across the region: 25 million people are in need of humanitarian aid and protection, more than 10 million have been displaced from their homes, and almost 15,000 people have lost their lives.

**Sadly, it is the most vulnerable, especially people with disabilities, who are the hardest hit.**

Our teams in Chad and Egypt are working hard to support disabled and vulnerable people, by providing physical rehabilitation services, mental health support and access to humanitarian aid. Without this vital support, the huge needs in these areas are barely covered, if at all.

**There will be an emergency collection soon**