



# 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 Feast of the Transfiguration

Every year the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> August. In the three-year cycle of the lectionary, we read at Mass from the accounts of this event in the words of Matthew, Mark or Luke. In each year, the Gospel begins with Jesus taking Peter, James and John, and they go up a high mountain.

In all three accounts, before this there is a short phrase: in Matthew and Mark, “six days later”, but Luke tells us that it was after about eight days.

This raises two interesting questions; six (or eight) days after what? Why does Luke give a different time difference? A third might be asked: does it matter?

The first question is easy to answer, and that is, it was after Peter recognised that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. In all three Gospel accounts, these two events are linked together, not just by being close to each other, but by a specific link being made.

The sequence of events is clear: Jesus asks his disciples who people say that he is, and they reply that some say he is John the Baptist, others Elijah or one of the other prophets. Then Jesus asks them very directly: “Who do **you** say I am”, and it is Peter who makes the clear statement that “you are the Christ”.

In all three Gospels, Jesus responds by telling them that he will suffer, be put to death, and will rise again on the third day. The exact detail of this differs slightly between the accounts, but all agree on this, and that then Jesus goes on to say that his followers will also suffer.

It was six (or eight) days after this that the Transfiguration took place. We need now to fast-forward to Holy Week. Friday is the sixth day of the week, and on that day Jesus was taken up the hill of Calvary. Here again, Jesus was transfigured, not so that his ‘face shone like the sun’, but the sun was obscured and there was darkness; the transfiguration was that of death. But on the ‘third day’ (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) he rose again, and had a new transfiguration into his risen body.

The preface to the Eucharistic Prayer makes this connection:

“For he revealed his glory in the presence of chosen witnesses and filled with the greatest splendour that bodily form which he shares with all humanity, that the scandal of the Cross might be removed from the hearts of his disciples and that he might show how in the Body of the whole Church is to be fulfilled what so wondrously shone forth first in its Head.”

Matthew and Mark are pointing us forward to Good Friday; Luke is pointing us to Easter Day. In both cases, we are being told not to read this story in isolation. It is part of a bigger picture.

The story is even bigger than that! We must not just fast-forward, we need also to rewind, because we are also seeing the fulfilment of the Old Testament.

When the Israelites, escaping from Egypt reached Mount Sinai they paused, and the events there shaped the whole of the future of the people. It was here that they received the Ten Commandments and what became the Jewish Law. There Moses took Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (together with seventy of the elders) up the mountain, and there they saw the God of Israel. (*Exodus 24:9-10*) Later we are told that when Moses came down from the mountain “the skin on his face shone because he had been taking with God”. (*Exodus 34:29*)

Some people thought that Jesus was Moses come back, or Elijah. But on the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, James and John saw Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus, so clearly he was neither of them. Moses’ face had shone, but this was an even greater glory that the disciples were seeing. Jesus was being revealed to them in his true glory, and this was confirmed by the voice of God himself.

Peter’s response to the experience may seem to be rather odd: “let us make three tents”. The word used for ‘tents’ is the same word that describes the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, which commemorates the journey through the wilderness after the exodus, during which the people lived in tents.

During this period the ‘Holy Place’ was the ‘Tent of the Meeting’, the place where Moses went to meet with God. (*Exodus 33:7-11*) There is yet another connection with our Gospel. We read that a ‘bright cloud covered them (Peter, James and John) with shadow. “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle”. (*Exodus 40:34*) It was from this ‘bright cloud’ that the voice of God was heard. St Peter makes reference to this in the part of his second letter which we read as the second reading at Mass today.

This indicates the importance of the event of the Transfiguration in the life of Peter. When Jesus predicted his passion and death after Peter had recognised him as the Christ, Peter could not accept it. When Jesus was arrested, he attacked the High Priest’s servant, cutting off his ear. (*John 18:10*) Yet we may imagine that Peter, in the time that followed the Resurrection thought back over the many events of his life with Jesus and would remember the many different conversations with Jesus and the things he had said, only a tiny number of which we have recorded in the Gospels.

Peter may not have recognised it at the time, but this transfiguration experience was part of the life-changing event which was his following of Jesus. Sometimes (perhaps even often) he got it wrong, but he remained faithful to Jesus until he finally gave the ultimate witness on the Vatican Hill, and establishing the Church in the centre of the empire, to which, and from which, all roads lead.



# Notices of Interest

**Car Park Safety:** Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. 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](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com).

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

**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.

**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.

## 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:** Enrolment for 2024 will be Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. after the 11am Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered & their parents at the 11am Mass on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Choir Notes:** our next practice is after evening Mass on the Holy Day of the Assumption of Our Lady 15<sup>th</sup> Aug.

**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.

**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 12<sup>th</sup> September in the Hall at 7.15 pm. Please register at [www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha](http://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 12<sup>th</sup> 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)**

## 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.

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

**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](mailto:volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk)

**Electrical Hazards:** We have recently had our statutory fixed wiring test, which was overdue thanks to the pandemic. The good news is that there were no serious deficiencies, but a number of repairs are needed to be done and in a few areas where the regulations have changed some up-dating is required to achieve compliance with the latest standards. 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. The plan is to change the lights in the nave before the clocks change in October. The circuit breakers for the hall lights are now obsolete, and must be changed; this is work in hand. Part of safeguarding is to ensure that in every respect the church is as safe as possible for all who come here.

**Refreshment Donations:** Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent	<b>The Hope Centre</b>
to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time	<b>Gregory Care</b>
to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	
Through Lent and Eastertide:	<b>CAFOD</b>
<b>Ordinary Time until the end of August:</b>	<b>Refreshment Fund</b>
September until the Harvest collection:	<b>CAFOD</b>
After harvest until the beginning of Advent:	<b>The Bible Society</b>

## 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



# Transfiguration of the Lord, 6<sup>th</sup> August, Year A

The Book of Daniel, was written about 170 BC during the bitter persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes. Apocalyptic literature was intended to strengthen the people in their suffering, using coded but readily understood visions. Prophetic teaching insists on right conduct, with the certainty that God's kingdom will prevail. Daniel's vision of the heavenly throne of God, approached by "One like a son of man", was used in the Book of Revelation. Jews applied this title to the Messiah, the One through whom salvation is realised.

The Psalm rejoices at the coming of the Lord as judge, overthrowing paganism and rewarding God's worshippers.

The Second Letter of Peter, was attributed to Peter but probably written some time after his death, possibly in the next century. Containing much positive teaching, it seeks to strengthen hearers in their faith, while warning them against false teachers, especially "those scoffers" who claim there will be no second

coming. The day of judgement "will come like a thief". We must be prepared while "we await the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells", foreshadowed by Jesus' transfiguration.

Matthew's description of the transfiguration includes several themes in the Old Testament and in Jewish apocalyptic literature to indicate the divine presence: bright light, cloud, white garments. With the Father's confirmation of his Son, these all indicate that Jesus will come in glory at the end of time.

Psalm response: The Lord is King,  
most high above all the earth

(Dan 7:9-10, 13-14; Ps 96(97):1-2,5-6,9; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Mt 17:1-9)

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.

## Fynnius Fogg Evening

Tickets will be available after Mass today at £12:50 for the fund-raising evening at the Cathedral Hall on 2nd September. This is to raise money for the Foodstore – Supper is included! (And a bar). Many of you will have seen them before and know what a fabulous evening it will be! We will also be collecting Tombola prizes over the next few weeks so if anyone has any new items suitable to donate please put them in the toiletry box at the back of church.

# Stella Maris in Ukraine

**("On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine – and our small team in Odesa, a major port on the south coast, found themselves at the heart of a humanitarian crisis. This is their story.....")**

"We never saw it coming," says Stella Maris assistant port chaplain Rostik Inzhestoikov. "The war was not forecast-able."

Speaking via WhatsApp from Odesa, where there are ongoing missile strikes, drone attacks and power blackouts, Rostik sounds tired. The stress of living in a warzone is taking its toll.

But Rostik is also upbeat — because looking back at 2022, he and port chaplain Fr Alexander Smerechynsky did everything possible to support Ukrainian seafarers and their families.

Amid the initial shock of the invasion, the pair organised transport to take the wives and children of seafarers to the border of Ukraine for evacuation and liaised with our team in Poland as a Stella Maris centre there became home to refugees.

Since then, Rostik and Fr Alex have provided humanitarian aid to retired seafarers, set up a soup kitchen for families of seafarers and delivered food to seafarers trapped on ships in the Black Sea. They provided pastoral and spiritual support to seafarers through social media. They even arranged for financial grants, provided through our Centenary Emergency Fund, to go to hundreds of seafarers' families.

All this, while grappling with their own hardship and fear. "You are always alert, waiting for an attack. You are never certain your family will be ok," said Rostik. "The biggest challenge during the winter were the power blackouts, because you still need to survive. For more than 15 hours a day, we had no electricity."

Looking back, it's clear their steadfast support has saved lives. "We've had hundreds of messages from grateful seafarers," said Rostik. "They appreciate not only the practical support but also our



words. We've talked with seafarers who have been on the bridges of ships watching bombs fall on their home cities.

They are so scared. But to talk with them, to be their friend... that counts."

Looking ahead, the need for ongoing support is vital — and shipping industry partners have a key role to play. "We don't know what the war will bring next, but I do know one thing: we must continue this work," said Rostik. "We are deeply grateful for all the support we receive."

**When you knit a woolly hat or mittens for a seafarer or fisher, you do more than just keep them warm. You remind them of your love and care.**

Can you spare a little time to make a hat for a seafarer or fisher?

For people working at sea, icy conditions and harsh storms are a regular occurrence. Days can feel long and cold. A knitted hat or mittens can not only help to protect them from the cold, but for the 1.5 million people who work at sea, transporting 90% of our goods, it can also remind them that someone cares about them. For someone who has been away from home for many months, facing difficult and often dangerous conditions this can mean a great deal.

Seafarers often tell us how much they appreciate the knitted items that they receive. So whether it's a hat, some mittens, or a balaclava, we will make sure they find a welcome home!

**Bob Maine can give you knitting patterns.**