



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

Prepare

The Gospel for the Sunday has the ringing voice of John the Baptist: “Prepare the way for the Lord”. Each year, in the three-year cycle of readings at Sunday Mass, on the second Sunday of Advent we read about John the Baptist. In Mark’s account, this is the beginning of the story. He tells us nothing about the birth or childhood of Jesus. Luke tells us about the Annunciation and the visit of the shepherds; Matthew tells us about the visit of the Magi. What we hear this week is different: “The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

We sometimes speak of the Bible as containing four Gospels, but this is not really accurate. The word ‘Gospel’ translates the Greek word ‘εὐαγγέλιον’ (euaggelion) which means ‘Good Message’. The prefix ‘eu’ means ‘good’, and an ‘aggelion’ is a message; hence an angel is a messenger.

The ‘Good News’ is the message of Jesus, and the four books of the Bible that tell the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus are each accounts of the one and the same ‘Good News’. For this reason, the four books of the Good News are headed: “The Good News according to . . .”. There is only one Gospel, one Good News; told through four different writers, but carrying the same message, the one piece of Good News, the Good News of Jesus Christ, Son of God. It is the same Good News that we are told to proclaim to the whole world (*Mark 16:15*).

The word ‘prepare’ is found three times in Mark’s account of the Good News; here in the passage we read today; in a statement about heaven, where Jesus tells James and John that the seats at his right and left are for those for whom they have been prepared, (*Mark 10:40*) and finally in the account of the Passover Meal in Holy Week (*Mark 14:12-16*) when the meal must be prepared.

‘Prepare’ is the message of Advent, and it is a two-fold preparation; most obviously, a preparation for the celebration of Christmas, the feast celebrating the first coming of Jesus, but just as important, a time of preparation for Christ’s second coming, whether that be at the end of all time, or at the end of the time of our mortal life.

We call the celebration of the birth of Jesus ‘Christmas’; Christ’s Mass. The supreme act of human worship is the celebration of Mass, and Mark’s reference to the preparation of the Passover Meal at which Christ instituted the celebration of Mass speaks to us of our preparation for Mass.

While the present restrictions prevail, many are watching Mass on line, and this makes a different sort of preparation than that which we may make when we go to Church. It is important to be mentally and spiritually ‘in the right place’ for participation in the Mass; this is especially true when we are not physically ‘in the right place’!

St John gives us a bit more information about the place which is prepared in heaven. “I go to prepare a place for you” (*John 14:2*), said Jesus at that Passover Meal whose preparation we have already noted. This is what Jesus has promised he will do, but the other preparations are for us to do.

This year we have another important preparation to make. Pope Francis has told the newly-formed Vatican COVID-19 Commission to “prepare the future”. We are not to sit back and wait to see what the future will be, but to be engaging in preparing the future.

There are so many problems afflicting the world as it is, leaving aside the immediate problem of the pandemic. The commission has a number of specific areas of interest, among them:

-  Ecology Climate change is possibly the most obvious area of concern, but pollution, particularly of the oceans and respect for the environment must be addressed.
-  Economics The pandemic has caused a catastrophic economic recession and has shown in sharp focus the injustice of the present distribution of wealth, and injustice in healthcare.
-  Labour The exploitation of cheap labour and ‘modern slavery’ are injustices that must be remedied.
-  Healthcare Pope Francis has called for the poor countries to be given their fair share of the vaccine, while rich countries stockpile millions of doses.
-  Security Global conflicts consume a high proportion of the planet’s resources and then cause destruction of yet more and are a prime cause of migration as well as premature deaths.

The initiative of Pope Francis is important. We are not called simply to react to the world as it is. We are called to ‘make disciples’ (*Matthew 28:19*), and this means that we are called to be teachers of the world. A famous saying wrongly attributed to Edmund Burke is: “the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” We are not called to do nothing, but to prepare.

Notices of Interest

SPUC - Prayer Group; Help us save the lives of unborn children: SPUC Northampton is actively looking for people to join the local branch. We meet every few weeks in order to plan & arrange pro-life initiatives. This is a personal invitation for you to join us. We promise that there will be no pressure to do anything you are not comfortable with. If you are unable to join the branch how would you feel about being part of our prayer team? We are looking for people to form a prayer team who will support us through prayer on an ongoing basis & on special occasions. All we ask is that you spend some time in prayer in support of our pro-life work. This can be done in the comfort of your own home or with others in the group. If you would like to join the branch or join the prayer group please contact William on 07393965643 (text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com. Prayer is a very powerful weapon in the fight to save our unborn children and we beseech Our Lady of Guadalupe to intercede for us in this battle.

COVID-19 Precautions We are in 'tier 2', & as responsible members of our community, we obey the Government Regulations in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives & livelihoods. Now that we can return to Mass, we must continue to try to suppress the spread of the virus & support those who remain vulnerable.
Face masks: Wearing face masks is compulsory in churches & you should wear one if you can. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this is the law.

Donations: We have recently received two very generous, anonymous donations. One for Gregory Care and the other for the general upkeep of the Church. Thank you both so much! They will both go to good use.

Repository: We have a stock of Calendars, diaries and Christmas cards available. If you wish to buy any, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.30am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go.

Bible Alive for December 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.

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School. If you have a child due to start primary school in September 2021, St Gregory's are welcoming parents to visit the school and see it in action. Contact 01604 403511 to arrange a visit. Closing date for place applications is 15th January 2021 at 5pm.

NYMO invite all young adults to an online advent retreat. Open to all aged 18-35yrs, each Tuesday of Advent, beginning on 1st December between 8.00-9.30pm join the team on zoom for a time of prayer, worship and reflection. [Email hello@nymo.org](mailto:hello@nymo.org) for more information.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds.
Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish.

Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church: The webinar series has been wonderful, and thank you to all who promoted it and came along throughout the series. We have had over 3,000 views! This is definitely something we will be looking to do again in the future. If you want to catch up with any you missed, all the videos are here: <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>

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.

Track and Trace: The government have now released their app to support track & trace & 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.

Financial Support for Self-Isolation: Please see the following article regarding financial help available for those who are self-isolating;
<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/health/coronavirus/how-apply-self-isolation-financial-support-now-available-across-northamptonshire-3004756>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 11th January, 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 2021: If you have a child who wishes to make their 1st Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at swatts49@outlook.com, who will note your name & the name & age of your child. This is still very much a first step as we are still unsure of how we can prepare the children at the moment; please be patient &, as soon as we possibly can, we'll give you more info about our programme & timings at which stage you can decide whether or not you wish to proceed.

Confirmation: Yet again we are thrown into confusion! We await more information. This continues to be difficult!

Parish Finances: As colder weather is here & we need to turn the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent through the lockdown; great thanks to all who have been so generous.

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)**

Bambinelli Sunday: St. John Paul II began a tradition where he invited the children of Rome to assemble in St. Peter's Square on the Third Sunday of Advent during his Angelus address and to bring their little statue of the baby Jesus that would be placed in their Nativity set at home. In recent years it has started to expand to other places outside of Rome. It is a beautiful Advent tradition, one that sanctifies the home with the baby Jesus and makes his arrival in the manger scene an even more joyous event. Bambinelli Sunday on 13th December. Bring your "Baby Jesus" to either Mass on 13th December for a blessing.

Tip No. 118 Solidarity with the Poor: W.B. Yeats wrote
But I, being Poor, have only My Dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams

Tip No. 119 Solidarity with the Poor: Please do not tread on the dreams of the poorest of the in the world by neglecting CAFOD this Christmas worldgifts.cafod.org.uk or phone 0800 14 000 14

Scripture Readings 6th December 2020, 2nd Sunday of Advent, Year B

Isaiah celebrates with fulsome praise their God who has enabled the Israelites to return from exile in Babylon. God has cleared the way for their return, just as He led his people during the Exodus from Egypt. Then God was visible in a small area as a pillar of cloud or fire. Now God's work should be shouted throughout the whole world.

In the Psalm a prophet, after the return from exile, first listens to hear what the Lord has to say, and then reports the joyful happiness revealed to him.

The second letter of Peter, written probably towards the end of the first century, addressed doubts about when Christ would return in majesty. God patiently guides mankind to the promised land of his kingdom, giving everyone plenty of time to turn to him. But the Day

of the Lord **will** come, and it will come to all creation, and when we least expect it.

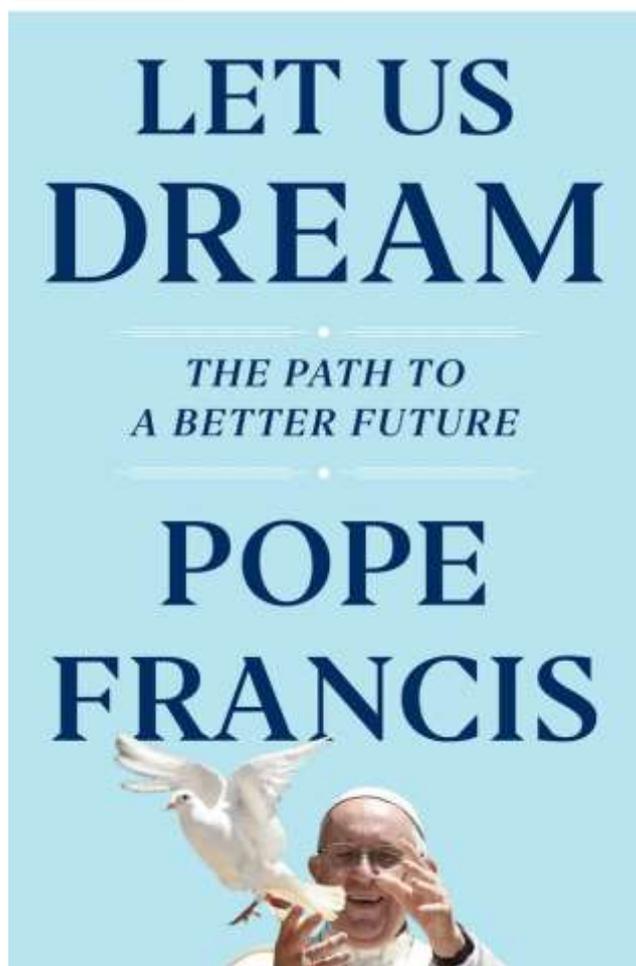
Mark's gospel omits any mention of Jesus' early life. It starts with Jesus' coming proclaimed by Isaiah and the Baptist. God was revealed to the Jews during the Exodus and in their return from exile. Now He is revealed to the whole world through his Christ, Jesus, confirmed as God's son at his baptism.

Psalm Response:

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy; and give us your saving help.

(Isa 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps 84:9-10, 11-12, 13-14; 2 Pet 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8)

Chris Oliver



In this uplifting and practical book, written in collaboration with his biographer, Austen Ivereigh, the preeminent spiritual leader explains why we must—and how we can—make the world safer, fairer, and healthier for all people now.

In the COVID crisis, Pope Francis saw the cruelty and inequity of our society exposed more vividly than ever before. He also saw, in the resilience, generosity, and creativity of so many people, the means to rescue our society, our economy, and our planet. In direct, powerful prose, Pope Francis urges us not to let the pain be in vain.

He begins *Let Us Dream* by exploring what this crisis can teach us about how to handle upheaval of any kind in our own lives and the world at large. With unprecedented candour, he reveals how three crises in his own life changed him dramatically for the better. By its very nature, he shows, crisis presents us with a choice: we make a grievous error if we try to return to some pre-crisis state. But if we have the courage to change, we can emerge from the crisis better than before.

Pope Francis then offers a brilliant, scathing critique of the systems and ideologies that conspired to produce the current crisis, from a global economy obsessed with profit and heedless of the people and environment it harms, to politicians who foment their people's fear and use it to increase their own power at their people's expense. He reminds us that Christians' first duty is to serve others, especially the poor and the marginalized, just as Jesus did.

Finally, the Pope offers an inspiring and actionable blueprint for building a better world for all humanity by putting the poor and the planet at the heart of new thinking. For this plan, he draws not only on sacred sources, but on the latest findings from renowned scientists, economists, activists, and other thinkers. Yet rather than simply offer prescriptions, he shows how ordinary people acting together despite their differences can discover unforeseen possibilities.

Along the way, he offers dozens of wise and surprising observations on the value of unconventional thinking, on why we must dramatically increase women's leadership in the Church and throughout society, on what he learned while scouring the streets of Buenos Aires with garbage-pickers, and much more.

Let Us Dream is an epiphany, a call to arms, and a pleasure to read. It is Pope Francis at his most personal, profound and passionate. With this book and with open hearts, we can change the world.

**This book might help us to "prepare the future" and realise our prayer —
"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"**

Vaccines

There has been concern that some vaccines have been developed using cells derived from tissue from aborted babies. The vaccine itself does not contain such cells, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy of Life have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this way. We have a moral duty to protect ourselves and others from the virus. Do not be swayed by the untruthful allegations which are circulating on the internet.

Christmas Mass arrangements

We will be under the same restrictions of social distancing for Christmas, and want to make it possible for as many as possible to attend Mass. In addition to the usual Masses (5.00 pm on Christmas Eve, Midnight, 9.00 am and 11.00 am on Christmas Day,). In recent years the 6.00 pm Vigil Mass has been the best attended; if similar

numbers were to come this year we would have to turn some people away. It would be possible to have an additional later vigil Mass, perhaps at 6.30 pm. If people would find that a help, please can they let Fr Andrew know (email is best). Under present rules, we still cannot sing, but there could be a soloist, though joining in would be illegal.

Conference of England and Wales declared this year 2020 as: THE GOD WHO SPEAKS: A YEAR OF THE WORD” and chose the theme in line with the spirit of the document, Verbum Domini. This initiative will be continued through 2021, not least because of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word

A Series of 3 Online Zoom Sessions exploring the upcoming Lectionary Readings and Seasons of the Liturgical Year. A valuable opportunity to develop our engagement with the Scriptures that we hear proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. Led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath is Adviser for Adult Faith Formation

Tuesday 17 November 2020, (7.30-8.30 pm) Preparing the Way for the Lord. Mark’s Gospel & The Season of Advent
Tuesday 19 January 2021, (7.30-8.30 pm) ‘He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures’(Lk 24:45) The importance of God’s Word for Christian identity & everyday living
Tuesday 16 February 2021, 7.30-8.30 pm: ‘Many more began to believe in him because of his Word’(John 4:41) John’s Gospel & The Season of Lent
Each session will include input, prayer and the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Cost: No charge but there will be the opportunity to make a donation. Please register in advance to secure a place by e mail or phone: email admin@nores.org.uk Once you booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions.



SECOND COLLECTIONS

13th September
4th October
11th October
18th October
15th November
29th November
13th December
20th December

Holy Places
CAFOD
Peter’s Pence
World Mission
World Communications
Day for Life
Home Mission
Sea Sunday

