



# 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 Faith of the Church

One of the earliest statements of the faith of the Church is to be found in several places in the writings of St Paul (the first-written parts of the New Testament).

The statement is simple and short: “Jesus is Lord”. (*see Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Philipians 2:11*) The Greek words are ‘Κυριος Ιησους’, ‘Kyrios Iesous’, and the word for ‘Lord’ is the word that we are familiar with at Mass: ‘Kyrie’ as in ‘Lord, have mercy’. Although the word ‘kyrie’ can be used in other senses, in this context, the word is applied to the supreme Lord, God. This credal statement is the earliest affirmation of what St John was later to express in the prologue to his Gospel regarding the Word which was from the beginning and was made flesh in the person of Jesus. The Holy Spirit, which, as Jesus promised, would guide the Church into all truth (*John 16:13*) led us to the full statements in our present creed, but the basic truth of them is there in that simple statement “Jesus is Lord”.

Our second reading today is an amplification of this first and most basic creed, and also touches on an important aspect of the work of the Church in every age. Our reading says:

“In the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself”. (*1 Corinthians 15:3*)

St Paul then goes on to say that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures. This is echoed in our present day Creed. (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*). The ESV\* gives a better translation:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”

At this point it is worth considering what ‘in accordance with the scriptures’ means in this context. At the point of writing this there was no such thing as the New Testament, and the only documents which existed and would become part of what we now know as the New Testament were St Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians. Certainly, there were no Gospels at this time. The only possible meaning of what St Paul is writing is what we now call the Old Testament. The teaching of the Resurrection is not explicit in the Old Testament, but there are the ‘songs of the suffering servant’ in Isaiah which the early Church understood as referring to Christ dying for our sins, (*Isaiah 53:4-5*) and the story of Jonah being inside the fish for three days and was then regurgitated being a prophesy of the resurrection. (*Matthew 12:39-40*)

\*ESV is the “English Standard Version” which will become the version that we use at Mass, probably later this year.

St Paul tells us that he is teaching what he has himself been taught. This is the beginning of what we call ‘Tradition’. It is important to distinguish between ‘Tradition’ and ‘traditions’. The one letter makes a big difference! ‘Tradition’ is the essential truth that has been handed down through the ages. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal.” (*Vatican II, Dei Verbum §9*) Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own “always, to the close of the age” (*Matthew 28:20*)

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church §80*)

Traditions, in the plural, are the ways in which we have done things in the past and which may or may not be helpful in the present or the future. For example, we have a long tradition of using Latin in worship, but since few people now understand Latin, a new tradition of using the local language has grown up. Attached to the tradition of using Latin there is a vast deposit of beautiful music, much of which many people still find helpful to their spiritual life. Some traditions rightly pass into obscurity, others remain valued, and others which had been discarded may re-appear. Traditions are not fundamental to the Faith; ‘Tradition’ is.

While on the subject of traditional music, there is a setting of the Mass by Gioacchino Rossini which he calls the ‘Petite Messe Solonnelle’ (and is certainly not ‘petite’, and hardly ‘solonnelle’); the Creed is magnificent, with the word ‘Credo’ (I believe) punctuating the text six times as an affirmation at significant points. This setting of the Mass is more in the form of an oratorio, just the musical parts last nearly an hour and a half, but the way in which the full choir joins in the repeated ‘Credo’ — I believe — is deeply moving.

The Creed, which we say at Mass is not simply a recitation of dogma; it encapsulates what is, as St Paul says, ‘of first importance’. It is the essence of the ‘Good News’ — the Gospel which the Church is commanded to proclaim to the ends of the earth.

It has been handed down to us by our parents or our teachers in the Faith, and, as St John Henry Newman observed, we are links in a chain, with the responsibility of delivering to others what we have received. This is what being a ‘Missionary Disciple’ means. And, as St Paul says, it is of ‘first importance’. This is what Pope Francis and Bishop David are also telling us. We must listen and obey.



# Notices of Interest

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

**Repository:** The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass. 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)

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

**Baptism Preparation:** The next preparation will be in the Sacristy on Mon. 21<sup>st</sup> February, 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book your place.

**First Holy Communion 2022:** There will be six 'in-person' sessions preparing for first Reconciliation, both at Sacred Heart church, Weston Favell from 3.00 pm until 5.00 pm on Saturdays, 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December before the Christmas break. Those preparing on-line will receive emails with what they need. After Christmas there will be sessions on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Confirmation in 2022:** Confirmation classes will start soon. Confirmation will take place on Saturday 2nd July. Registration will open 13th March for two weeks. The course will commence thereafter.

**A Free Lunch?** There is no such thing, but there will be a free dinner on Tuesday evening, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. There really is no catch, except that if you enjoy the evening, you may like to become involved in the Alpha programme. If you don't, no problem!

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** TINY TOTS look forward to seeing you: if you have charge of a pre-school child, from 9:30- 11:30 on a Tuesday morning, you are most welcome!

**Choir Matters:** practices are Fridays 1:45 – 3:00 pm starting Feb 4, (Ash Wed is Mar 2): Mar 4, 11, 18, 25 and Apr 1, 8 as we prepare for Easter (Apr 17). *Alec*

**Food Parcels:** Please get in touch with Gregory Care (07434669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

**Parish Finances:** Continued thanks for the wonderful generosity that you are showing to the parish.

**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)**

**Parish and Diocesan Finances:** There are still calculations to be done in relation to our financial contribution to the Diocese, but a rough estimate is that we will need to find a further £164 each week for this. Although we know the effect of the raised gas prices for domestic users, the Church as a charity is treated differently and the implications of the price rise are not yet clear. This will impact seriously on our parish finances. As fuller figures become available, they will be published and a parish budget for the coming year will be published. As we do this, it would be helpful if we all looked at our own personal and family giving to the Church. One significant help would be to make your giving through standing order; the details of our account are above, and if you pay income tax, please ask for a Gift Aid form.

**Gregory Care update on toiletry donations:** Thank you to everyone who has donated toiletries to be sent out with food bags from the cathedral.

**Synod News!** The Synod discussions are continuing this week.

This is your chance to express your views on:

- ? What it means to you to be a Catholic
- ? What are your experiences of the Church doing something well
- ? What are your experiences of when things have not gone so well
- ? What are your dreams for the Church
- ? How do you feel about the Alpha programme

This Sunday 6th after the 9.00 am Mass in the hall. Have a piece of cake and a cuppa and join us. Next Sunday 13th after the 11.00 am Mass in the hall... And yes, we'll even provide refreshments! **YOU ARE ADVISED NOT TO PARK IN THE CAR PARK** if you do not wish to get blocked in.

If you cannot make either of these sessions and would like to be part of the discussion, please contact Catherine Mulligan or Jehanne Houghton in the hall after Mass or via the Parish Secretary to arrange a meeting.

There will also be a box on the table at the entrance to the church marked SYNOD (near the sanitisers) if you prefer to answer the questions individually or with family. **All responses are confidential and anonymous.**

**Courses for Readers:** The Bible Timeline course has resumed after the Christmas break, and continues on Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm. on Zoom. We are looking at the era of division after the reign of Solomon. Last week we looked at the South, and how although they had every advantage, they were still. This week we will look at the South, the Kingdom of Judah and how they fared. Please email to Fr Andrew for further details. New people are welcome to join!

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

**Northampton Diocese Vacancy:** For all info on vacancies, please go to [northamptondiocese.org/jobs/](http://northamptondiocese.org/jobs/) or email [hradmin@northamptondiocese.com](mailto:hradmin@northamptondiocese.com).

**Pivotal Players:** "We are all Catholics now" So says Gabriel Syme in G. K. Chesterton's 'The Man who was Thursday' (a good read!). Chesterton was a convert to the Catholic faith, and with his friend Hilaire Belloc, were firm defenders of Catholicism. His life and witness shows that the fundamental disposition of effective evangelism is joy, and life in Christ is a day-to-day encounter with an abundant and surprising offer of grace. Belloc expressed this in verse: "Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, there's always laughter and good red wine." When a now-forgotten university don attacked Chesterton in print, Belloc wrote a poem in defence of his friend: "Remote and ineffectual don that dared attack my Chesterton with that poor weapon, half-impelled, Unlearned, unsteady, hardly held, Unworthy of a tilt with men, your quavering and corroded pen" and so on for 59 lines of invective! The Acts course will be delayed until the state of the pandemic is clearer as it is not easy to socially distance in the Sacristy. It will be on Tuesday mornings after Mass beginning when it is safe to do so. On Tuesday evenings we plan for training for Alpha leaders and on Wednesday evenings the Zoom Bible Timeline is continuing. Please email Fr Andrew for the Zoom links.

# Scripture Readings 6th February 2022, 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Isaiah's calling vision in 742 BC is much quoted in the book of Revelation. He sees God enthroned, with Seraphs who had two wings covering their faces, two covering their body, and with two they flew. They praised God for his total otherness, and their "Holy, Holy, Holy" is repeated before the central part of every Mass. Isaiah expects to die after seeing God's face. But he is symbolically purified by a burning ember on his lips, and so is fit to deliver God's message of doom to those who mistreat the poor. Only a remnant will survive.

Paul reminds the Corinthians of their roots and especially the gospel he taught them. He uses an existing creedal formula that he himself "had been taught", namely "that Christ **died**", "he was **buried**; he was **raised**; he **appeared**". Paul goes on to argue that, in rising, Christ has conquered death, and therefore all the dead

will also rise. Life after death is bodily, not just spiritual, as the Corinthians appeared to believe.

After Jesus was rejected in Nazareth he went down to Capernaum, where he taught and healed many people, including Simon's mother-in-law. Today Luke describes Simon Peter recognising Jesus as "Lord", his title after the Resurrection. Peter and his partners accept Jesus' call, and follow him, leaving absolutely everything.

Psalm Response: **Before the angels I will bless you, O Lord.**

(Isaiah 6:1-2a,3-8; Psalm 137(138); 1 Cor 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11)

*Chris Oliver*

## An Invitation to all who volunteer in the Parish

The parish could not function without the help of many, many volunteers who help in a vast number of different ways. Some are very obvious and can be seen; but others are 'behind the scenes' and less visible. We have been going through a tough time in many different ways, and this is a way of saying 'thank you'. On Friday March 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a dinner in the hall, to which all volunteers for the parish are invited. There is no charge – this is

not a fund-raising occasion, no raffle, no collection plate, just an occasion for the parish to say thank you to all who give so generously. The only condition is that you RSVP to this invitation by email to Helen at [helentme00@hotmail.com](mailto:helentme00@hotmail.com) so that we know the numbers and can cater adequately. It will be a proper meal (don't eat first), but being a Friday, will not involve meat.

## More on the Methodology of Alpha

Last week we looked at the significance of the meal in relation to the way in which we know that Jesus used meals to draw people to himself, and we know how it is at a meal that he made himself known to the disciples at Emmaus, and how at Mass day by day he still makes himself known to his disciples. We also saw how the preparation and the serving of the meal requires the skills of both Mary and Martha. (See *Luke 10:38-42*)

But what is a meal without guests. Jesus describes such a meal in one of the parables. It appears twice in slightly different forms, once as a wedding banquet (*Matthew 22:1-14*) and once as a great dinner. (*Luke 14:16-24*) Both of these are making the point that if the first people invited to the meal do not come, others will be invited in their place. This is telling us that there is an invitation from Jesus, and that invitation is for everyone. Even when some have come, there is still room (*See Luke 14:22*).

Jesus is continually inviting: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest". (*Matthew 11:28*)

Sadly many do not hear that invitation, and that is why a vital part of the Alpha methodology is that the invitation is delivered, and that brings in another sort of disciple of Jesus. The Martha-type disciples have prepared the room and the meal, and are ready to do the washing up afterwards. The Mary-type disciples have been listening to Jesus, and are ready to help the guests. Perhaps a good model for the missing type of disciple is the Samaritan woman, who, having realised that Jesus was someone really special, even if her understanding was not yet complete, "went back into the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done.'" (*John 4:28-29*)

Without this sort of disciple, the wedding hall will be empty! The next Alpha is planned for after Easter, perhaps starting late April or early May, but before then we are planning a 'taster evening' on Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7.30 pm. This will be a 'one-off' evening designed for people who have never experienced Alpha. It will begin with a meal, and is followed by a video, and then a chance for conversation about what you have seen.

Part of the methodology of Alpha is that it is designed to be non-threatening. People can say what they think, and will not be argued with and there is no pressure put on anyone. Some will say that it is not for them, but by God's grace, for very many people it is a life-changing experience. If you are uncertain about the whole project, come for this one evening and find out for yourself. You could then become one of the inviters.

It would be good if twelve people who come to Mass regularly would invite one other person each to come with them to the Alpha course, making 24 people. Together with the hosts, that would make about 30 people, which is a good number for catering.

We read in the psalms: "I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to God's house'". (*Psalm 121:1 [Greek] or Psalm 122:1 [Hebrew]*) The key word here is '**us**'. I did not rejoice when they said, 'You go'; but when they said, 'let us go together'. It is so much easier to go somewhere new when you are in company. Part of our understanding of the Church is that we are a community. In the Acts of the Apostles we read of the early Church:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (*Acts 2:42*)

It is the second of these characteristics of the Church that is key here — fellowship, or community. What Jesus did first was to gather around him a small community who began as disciples (people who were learning) and end up as apostles (people who are sent out). It is that community which became the core of the early Church. Now our community is called to the apostolate.

The fourth of the characteristics is also important, and next week we will look at the prayer which sustains and supports all our evangelistic efforts. There may well be many who are wishing that they could be involved, but perhaps through old-age or infirmity cannot. Here is the good news — you can! Pray for the teams, pray for the hosts, pray for the guests. What is done through prayer may turn out to be the most important part.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February we had the quinquennial survey of the church by the Diocesan surveyor. Mercifully no disastrous issues came to light, but we have a number of matters which we are required to deal with this year. These are matters which we can do ourselves, but volunteers will be needed. Most importantly, the external barge-boards of the hall need re-painting. This can be done off a ladder, it was last done about ten years ago, and is a two-person job in good weather. Slightly less important but more labour-intensive is the re-painting of the inside of the church side aisles. The North aisle was re-painted some years ago, but the South aisle has not been re-painted since the mid 90s. From past experience, each aisle can be done inside a week if a good team of painters and labourers can be assembled. It will be best to save this until better weather, so there will be an appeal for volunteers, including some who are willing to work on the top of the scaffold tower.

DIocese of Northampton Liturgy Commission- LITURGICAL FORMATION

## The God Who Speaks - Our Liturgy of the Word



*A Series of 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 the Liturgical Formation Team with presentations by Liz Clark, Fr Allan Jones CRIC, Mgr Kevin McGinnell & Fr Andrew Behrens

**Wednesday 23 February 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)**

*Preparing for Lent*

**Wednesday 6 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)**

*Preparing for the Triduum*

**Wednesday 20 April 2022, (7.30-8.30pm)**

*Celebrating Eastertide*

*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](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk) or phone: 01582 723312 (ext 1) Once your booking is received you will be sent details of how to join the online Zoom sessions. Thank you.

*(Photo from [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com))*

## Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.  
All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever. Amen

*It's a huge undertaking,  
but the Synod is getting  
underway in our diocese.*

## Synod 2021-23

- How we will manage our conversations in the parish will be announced soon. Pope Francis is clear that the voices of the loud and powerful and those with an axe to grind or a bee in their bonnet should not drown out the voice of the quiet and the marginalised.

## St Gregory's next Alpha:

To the right are the dates of the next Alpha course which we are hoping will be able to be in the hall and in person. It is highly recommended for everyone, and is very enjoyable. Each session starts with a good meal (A proper evening meal, not just a snack), then we watch a film together about our faith. After the film we have a conversation around our table about what we have seen and heard. It is good to have established believers as well as potential converts and those who simply want to know more about our faith. Please come, and if you can, bring a friend. There is no charge, but donations are cheerfully accepted. For catering purposes, please register at [www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha](http://www.stgregory.org.uk/alpha)

<b>First session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Is there more to life than this?
<b>Second Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Who is Jesus?
<b>Third Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Why did Jesus die?
<b>Fourth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> How can I be sure of my faith?
<b>Fifth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Why and how do I pray?
<b>Sixth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> How does God guide us?
<b>Seventh Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Why and how should I read the Bible?
<b>Away-Day:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Who is the Holy Spirit?
<b>Eighth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> How can I resist evil?
<b>Ninth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> Why and how should we tell others?
<b>Tenth Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> What about the Church?
<b>Eleventh Session:</b>	<b>After Easter 2022:</b> What about the rest of my life?

