



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

Eastertide — 50 days of Joy

We have been through 40 days of penitence in Lent; now we have 50 days of celebration. This balance seems to be correct; we spend longer in celebrating the Resurrection than in worrying about our sins.

But in both seasons, Jesus is at the centre. In Lent the Crucifix is the central image of Jesus; throughout Eastertide the resurrection appearances are at the heart of our devotion to Jesus. But both before and after Easter, Jesus is at the centre.

Both seasons have another common factor. In both seasons we are being encouraged to make spiritual progress. Traditionally there are three aspects to this, sometimes called the ‘purgative way’ the ‘illuminative way’ and the unitive way’. These are not to be thought of as like three phases of education; primary, secondary and higher, where once we have passed some exam we move on to the next level. Rather, they form three aspects of the spiritual life which run side-by-side throughout life, but at different times one or another will dominate. In Lent, we are encouraged to spend time in the purgative way, seeking to recognise our sins so that we can confess and be forgiven, and improve our life. In Eastertide the long tradition of the Church has been to focus on the illuminative way; on our deeper understanding of the mysteries of Christ. This ‘understanding is not just intellectual, it is much more than that. It is holistic — complete — it is about a deeper Christian life, personal, prayerful and practical.

These are not exclusive, and both run together with the unitive way, the recognition that we are one with Christ and one in Christ; not just at the moment of receiving Holy Communion, but constantly. We seek to live in this way always, but human reality gets in the way, and so both purgative and illuminative continue.

Lent was and remains the season of preparation for Baptism, particularly for adults, but Baptism was not, and must not ever be, seen as the end of Christian growth. After Easter the newly-Baptised, in modern terminology, are ‘mentored’. The ancient word was ‘mystagogia’ meaning ‘guided through the mysteries’ (αγαγεῖν: *to guide or lead*). The ‘mysteries’ was an ancient word to describe the Mass, but in this context, included the celebration of Christian Initiation.

In our present celebration of Easter, we recognise this in our renewal of Baptismal promises at the Easter Masses. This ‘mystagogia’ does not end with the first Pentecost after Baptism; rather it continues throughout the illuminative way. The two are inextricably linked. Illumination is the interior effect of mystagogia.

Pope Benedict, in his Apostolic Exhortation ‘Sacramentum Caritatis’ (22 February 2007) writes of mystagogia that: “in the Church’s most ancient tradition, the process of Christian formation always had an experiential character” and “the best catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself” (§ 64).

The value of curiosity has already been noted (see the piece on Alpha elsewhere in this newsletter) and this is equally true about the celebration of Mass. Why do we do that? What is the reason for this? These are perfectly proper questions, to which there will be an answer. Don’t be afraid to ask.

There is a proverb: “Curiosity killed the cat” whose origin is uncertain, but is only part of the saying; it continues that “satisfaction brought it back”. A proverb about resurrection seems appropriate in Eastertide, and in its complete form, is not a discouragement to curiosity. Do not be put off!

It is curiosity that drives scientific progress, and while such progress can have negative consequences, the search for knowledge is not of itself a bad thing. “Methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 159)

The Re: New Catholic Mission in Northampton encourages curiosity. Those who are curious or who are searching; those who are weary and burdened are invited to find a more fulfilled life through the Re: New programme which takes place in the Cathedral Hall between 10 am and midday on the second Saturday (11th May, 8th June and 13th July) is another opportunity to grow in faith.

Mystagogia is not just for adults who have recently been Baptised; it is for **all** who have been Baptised, and continued throughout life.

Thank you to all

So many people contributed to the wonderful parish celebration of Easter and in so many different ways. It would be impossible to list everyone who helped, so everyone, please accept this word of

thanks. Fr Andrew particularly thanks everyone for their generosity, not just in the Easter collection, but also to Gregory Care on Thursday and for the Holy Places in Jerusalem on Good Friday.

Notices of Interest

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

Bible Alive for April 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):

Saturday 13th April: Table top sale for Gregory Care

Tuesday 16th April: Next Alpha course starts

Saturday 27th April: Pro-Life Life Chain on St Peters Way, 11.00 – 1.00

Sunday 23rd June: Parish Picnic in the Park *More details nearer the time*

Friday 19th to Saturday 20th 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)**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 8th April at 7pm 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 for further information.

Next Alpha will be after Easter:

First session:	April 16th:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	April 23rd:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	April 30th:	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	May 7th:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	May 14th:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 21st:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	June 4th:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	June 8th:	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	June 11th:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	June 18th:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 25th:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	July 2nd:	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.

Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Hour: This will take place at Our Lady's Shrine, Great Billing on Sunday 7th April at 3pm.

The Annunciation of the Lord: 24 Hour Adoration Monday-

Tuesday 8th-9th April: There will be Mass at on Monday 8th April at 10.30am at Our Lady's Shrine, Great Billing. This will be followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which will continue until the 9.30am Mass at Great Billing on Tuesday 9th April.

Church Cleaning: Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month (**next – 27th April**), 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.

Diocesan Bible Study: The next study session will be on Wednesday 10th April on Zoom starting at 7.30 pm, and will be looking at the Eastertide Sunday Mass readings. Please email Fr Andrew for the link. Although these are regular events, each one is a free-standing session; there is no need to have done any before. They are designed to be helpful to those who proclaim the scriptures at Mass on Sundays, but are open to everyone.

Care for our environment: Since 2015 we have been celebrating the 'Season of Creation' from September 1st to October 4th, 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, or other environmental issues, it would be good to get together. Please let Fr Andrew know if this would be of interest.

Special Thanks to Jesus Youth for the (much needed) new carpet in the Sacristy. The old carpet lasted over 40 years, but had developed a crease which had become a trip-hazard.

Pro Life Chain - Saturday 27th April 2024: Saturday 27th April, between 11am & 1pm, SPUC Northampton is holding a Pro-Life Chain on St Peters Way Northampton. If you can join us or want more information, then please contact William on 07393965643(text is fine) or wpcurrie@btinternet.com

Wool for Stella Maris Woolly Hats If you have any spare knitting wool for hats, please drop it off at the church for our knitters. Aran will make the cosiest hat! Seafarers & mariners love bright colours as well as the more traditional dark colour palette. Please avoid pastels as they get dirty quickly. If you would like more information or care to get involved, scan the QR code. Thank you, *Bob*



Diocesan Pilgrimages: There will be a coach for the Walsingham pilgrimage from St. Gregory's on 8th June (leaving 8am sharp), and the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage will be from Friday 23rd Aug to Friday 30th Aug. Booking details for both will follow shortly.

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:	CAFOD
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

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**



For Sale

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

Sunday 7th April: 2nd Sunday of Eastertide, Year B

During the six weeks of Easter the first readings are from the Book of Acts, in which Luke describes Jesus continuing his ministry through the Church after his earthly life ended. Not intimidated by his arrest, Peter continued to attract many Jews to follow Jesus. Today we hear how this growing community held their assets in common. The next verses give two examples: Barnabas who gave the proceeds from selling a field; and Ananias and his wife, who held back some of the proceeds and were struck dead by Peter in his Apostolic role as a Judge of Israel.

The dramatic Passover Psalm from Easter Sunday is repeated today more fully, thanking God for repeatedly coming to our rescue and saving us.

The second readings in Eastertide are from the first letter of John,

whose gospel said little about Jesus' humanity and his moral teachings. Some members of John's community needed to be reminded that our faith is in a man, Jesus, who is Son of God, God's Christ. Loving God means keeping his commandments.

The gospel reading is the beautiful first ending of John's gospel, after Thomas, in the highest expression of faith in any of the gospels, acclaims Jesus as "My Lord and my God".

Psalm Response: **Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His love has no end.**

(Acts 4: 32-35; Psalm: 117(118); 1 John 5: 1-6; John 20: 19-31)

Chris Oliver

Stay Curious

We are told that we must love God with all our heart and with all our mind and with all our strength. (*Mark 12:30*) Loving God with all our mind means that we have to apply our reason to our faith.

There are some who follow the calculations of Archbishop James Ussher which placed the act of creation on 22nd October 4004 BC. He was the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, and published his chronology in 1650, and was generally accepted by protestants up to the 19th century, and still by some fundamentalist Creationists.

It was not only scientists who questioned the Ussher chronology, even in the protestant world theologians disputed his dating. The Catholic Church has never speculated on the age of the earth.

"The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man. These

discoveries invite us to even greater admiration for the greatness of the Creator, prompting us to give him thanks for all his works and for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers. With Solomon they can say: "It is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements. . . for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church §283*)

There are many opportunities for satisfying curiosity in this season of Mystagogia; the Alpha Course which starts on Tuesday 16th April and runs on Tuesday evenings on the dates listed opposite, which is suitable for everyone, and examines the basics of the Christian Faith. There is the Re: New series of meetings on Saturdays at the Cathedral Hall. Dates in May, June and July are listed on the front page. This coming Wednesday is a Zoom session on the Sunday readings for Eastertide, starting at 7.30 pm and lasting about an hour. To get the Zoom link, please email to Fr Andrew.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: There will be 40 hours of continuous adoration from 7.00 am on Friday 19th July until 11.00 pm on Saturday 20th July. This is part of the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee year in 2025. 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. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Hall.

Donorbox: St. Gregory's has signed up with Donorbox to enable people to make donations to the Church via a QR code. This is a safe & easy way of making a one-off donation without having to have cash on you!

If you have a smartphone, just point your camera at the QR code, click the link & the site will see you through the donation process. There is a larger version of this QR code in the Narthex area and in the hall for refreshment donations!



Bishop David is seeking experienced Directors/School Governors to represent his wishes on the Duns Scotus Trust – the diocesan body that has ultimate oversight of all diocesan schools and reports back to the Trustee. For an information pack or to discuss this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Main at debbie.main@northamptondiocese.org

Caspar

This system is being rolled out across the diocese. The only essential information is your name and email address, although your home address and telephone number are useful, and a photo always helps! To comply with GDPR, each adult person must fill in their own registration form.

I hope that this will improve our communication, but that depends on our data being correct and up-to-date. Please help us to do this.



Parish Registration

We will soon be using a new computer system to help us manage our parish better. It starts with us making sure that we have up to date contact information for all of our parishioners and so we would be grateful if you could complete the registration form by clicking on this QR code or by typing the link into your browser.

www.caspar.church/me?ID=56067



If you don't have an email address, please speak to the parish who can complete the form on your behalf.

← Stay Curious: Try Alpha →