



# 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

# Nights of grief

The book of Job deals with one of the most important questions of human life: why do good people suffer? It is a question that is frequently asked by those who find faith in God difficult. It can take many forms; typically, why does God allow children to die; why does God not prevent tsunamis, earthquakes and other natural disasters; in short, why is so much of what happens so unfair.

This is a problem for every age, and there have been arguments about when the book of Job was written. It does not concern itself with the events of its era; it could be set in any time and in any place. A humorous verse attributed to the High Court judge, Baron Bowen says:

The rain it raineth on the just  
And also on the unjust fella;  
But chiefly on the just, because  
The unjust hath the just's umbrella.

In the current pandemic, much research has gone into the reasons why some people seem to have no symptoms at all and for others the disease is fatal. In the early days we were told that it was only serious for those who had underlying medical conditions, but this was soon shown to be untrue, and some of those who died were young and fit, while others with serious conditions made a full recovery. We could join with Job in complaining that much in the world is unfair.

As a parish, we are supporters of the fair trade movement. From Ghana this country imports Fairtrade bananas and some processed cocoa products. Since we have left the European Union, there have been tariffs on these imports which will remain until Britain signs a trade agreement with Ghana. Without that agreement, the farmers cannot economically import into Britain. Thanks to Fairtrade, the children of the farmers have been able to receive education, healthcare, clean water. Fortunately the government has indicated that a trade deal will be done, but this has not happened yet. However, the very fact that there is a Fairtrade movement is clear indication that much trade is not fair.

Those who have bought flats in buildings with unsafe cladding, and now find that their property is unsaleable and therefore worthless, and are equally unable to afford the increased insurance or the increased service charge to cover a 'waking watch' can equally complain about the unfairness of their treatment. Those who find

that they now live in flood-risk areas and cannot get insurance also have cause for complaint.

Many complain, like Job, of sleepless nights thanks to circumstances which are beyond their control, and for which they do not believe that they are to blame.

Three friends come to see Job. When they arrive they simply sit with him in silence. The trouble really begins when they open their mouths. (How true that so often is!)

According to their theology and philosophy, God must be punishing Job for some sin that he has committed. "Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities." (*Job 22:5*) Job himself knows that this is not the case, and we have been told at the beginning of the book that he "was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil." (*Job 1:1*)

In the end Job's 'comforters' are put in their place when God himself speaks, although he does not give an answer to the fundamental question, 'why'.

We only read from Job on a Sunday twice in the three-year cycle; the other time will be in June this year when we will read God's answer to Job. His answer is not an explanation, rather it is a series of other questions.

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements — surely you know!"

One of the stages of growing up is called the 'Why phase', and it derives from a natural curiosity about the world into which the child has come. While psychologists say that a child will grow out of it, it may be nearer the truth that we never actually stop asking why things are as they are. This could be for the good reason that we want to try to make them better, or for the bad reason that we want to be able to blame someone else.

The story of Job tells us that there are some things that we can never know for certain in this life. Job eventually answers:

"I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer, twice, but will proceed no further" (*Job 40:4-5*)

In the meanwhile, as the prophet Micah says:  
"Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God"  
(*Micah 6:8*)



# Notices of Interest

**Repository:** If you wish to buy anything, please come to the Church between 9 and 10.00am and speak to a Steward who will show you what to do and where to go.

**Bible Alive** for Lent 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.

**COVID-19 Precautions:** We are in lockdown, & 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.

**The God Who Speaks- Our Liturgy of the Word** The last of the three sessions is on 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. Led by Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Alex Heath, Adviser for Adult Faith Formation. Regrettably, this is at the same time as the first Alpha session, but is recorded and will be available to see afterwards.

**The Big Church Read:** Each year we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with a joint Bible Study. With the current regulations in force, our normal event cannot take place, but instead, there is an interesting opportunity being organized by Broadmead Baptist Church. The Big Church Read encourages churches to form book clubs & read a book together with videos & group questions put together by the author – all completely free. All a person has to do is buy the book & even that can be discounted. Starting at the beginning of February, Churches, small groups, book clubs, huddles & individuals across Northampton are coming together to read Pete Hughes bestselling book 'All Things New'. Starting in Genesis & working through the Scriptures, The Big Northampton Church Read through All Things New will take you on a journey into the very heart of God & His relentless passion to redeem lives, heal the nations, rewire the culture, & bring renewal to all of creation. This book sits beside the Bible Timeline, & should prove to be interesting and worthwhile. If you are interested, then please check out the website <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/allthingsnew/>, where you can order the book & sign up to receive more information. The author will be providing a weekly video as well as group questions & as a huge bonus will also be doing a live virtual Q&A.

**Right to Life:** A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. The evidence that babies can feel pain in the womb, and during many abortions, highlights the humanity of the unborn child and provides another important reason to introduce legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion. Right To Life UK have set up an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP, and ask them to sign this motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. It only takes 30 seconds using this easy-to-use tool. This tool can be accessed by visiting the link below: [www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion)

**Cross in the car park:** You may have seen the cross on the wall in the car park; this is a gift from Mr Gerald Smith, and is made from wood salvaged from the demolition of the Notre Dame Convent School. This ties in with the 'Rood in the Wall' told in the history of the parish (<https://stgregory.org.uk/church-and-parish>).

**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.

**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.

**Tots @St Gregory's:** As with other meetings, Tots has been cancelled until further notice.

**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/>

**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:** 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 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion next year & are in school years 3-6, please email Stella at [swatts49@outlook.com](mailto: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 and, 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!

**To Catholic Universe and Catholic Times readers in the parish:** at the moment you are unable to collect your paper at Mass, but you can get it delivered direct to your home every week, POST FREE. Please go to [www.thecatholicuniverse.com](http://www.thecatholicuniverse.com) or call them on 0161 820 5722 and they will arrange for you.  
SPECIAL OFFER - 3 MONTHS: £25.00 — 12 Months: £99.00  
DIGITAL COPY: 12 Months: £55.00

**Parish Finances:** As colder weather is here & we have the heating on, our finances will come under a bit of strain. We have kept solvent throughout 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)

# Scripture Readings 7th February 2021, 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

In this Wisdom Book the blameless Job laments his sufferings at great length. The Lord allowed Satan to afflict Job any way he chose except death. Today's reading describes the drudgery that many people see in their lives, with only death to look forward to. Job refuses to curse God, but challenges God to say what he has done to deserve these sufferings. Then he accepts that "I have dealt with great things that ... I cannot know". But Job's challenge is not answered.

The Psalm sings the praises of God who restored Israel to Jerusalem after their exile, and who sustains the needy.

Our readings from Paul's letter to the Corinthians have omitted a long argument that Christians should not behave in a way that might be a stumbling block to others. Today Paul gives an example: he does not

claim justifiable payments for spreading the gospel in case people doubt his motives – and so doubt the gospel message.

In Mark's gospel the demoniac was healed by word, now Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law by touch – well enough for her to get supper immediately. Jesus heals many more, but again the demons are not allowed to say who Jesus is – Jesus cannot be understood until the Cross demonstrates God's infinitely merciful love for mankind.

Psalm Response: **Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.**

(Job 7: 1-4, 6-7; Psalm 146(147):1-6; 1 Cor 9: 16-19, 22-23; Mark 1: 29-39)

Chris Oliver



**Tuesday evenings**  
Beginning 16th Feb for 11 weeks

Your greatest adventure awaits...

To register, please email: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

Explore Life Faith Meaning

Alpha Online

ALPHA COURSE

Do you have questions about life? Do you want to grow in your faith in this difficult time? Do you want to connect with others?

Why not try Alpha online?

Or maybe you know someone who has questions? Maybe they wouldn't want to come to Church but they may feel comfortable joining an online course?

We really encourage you to invite them to Alpha online! Alpha is an 11 week course where people can explore the big questions of life.

We are beginning our first Alpha online this term on Tuesday evenings starting on 16th February at 7.30pm.

If you have never done Alpha or have been unable to join us because of, for example, childcare commitments in the evenings, this may be the perfect opportunity for you.

**Dates:**

16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March.  
6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May.  
Retreat day: Sat 17<sup>th</sup> April

To receive the zoom code please sign up online

(<https://stgregory.org.uk/alpha>) or email Maria Heath: maria.heath@yahoo.co.uk

## Alpha on Line!

### Preparing for Lent: The Living Simply Needs of Life

Psychologist A. Maslow said a person cannot have the motivation to reach their potential unless these needs are met.



This is derived from the theory of Abraham Maslow, first proposed in 1943, and developed in his book "A Theory of Human Motivation" in 1954. Although some question the detail of the theory, the general principles are widely accepted.

It is usually depicted as a pyramid, in which the most basic needs are at the bottom. Unless these needs are met, the needs in the higher levels cannot be fulfilled.

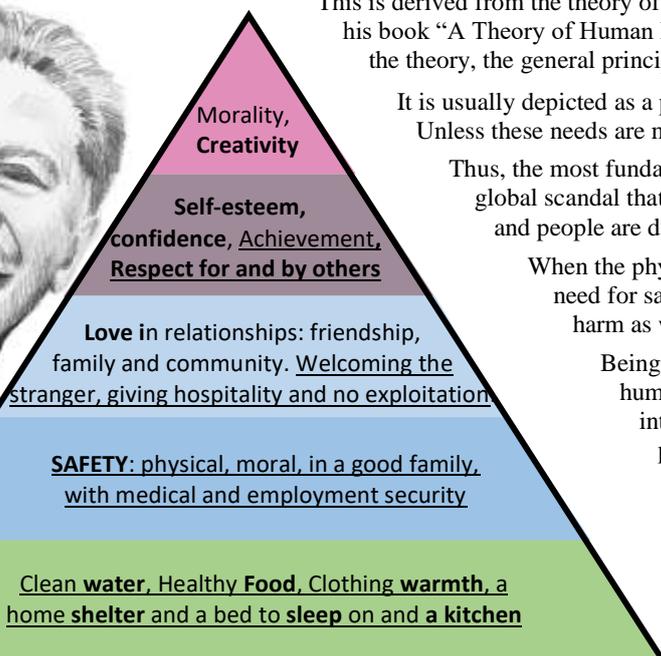
Thus, the most fundamental needs are those which sustain life itself: it is a global scandal that there are many who do not have access to clean water, and people are dying for lack of food in many parts of the world.

When the physical requirements for life are met, there is then the need for safety and security, both in terms of safety from physical harm as well as safety from psychological harm.

Being part of a community and having friends is important in all human life. Immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers must be integrated into wider society. The Church can play a vital part in this.

With all these in place, a person can have a real sense of self-esteem, and feel that they belong in their community.

*This week, as a preparation for Lent can I make time to review, candidly, where I could improve the support I give to people to reach their potential?*



## Coming up very soon ...The Season of Lent

The present lockdown will continue at least half-way through Lent, and even then, social distancing rules will continue — it is unlikely that we will be able to resume face-to-face meetings for some time yet. Even as more and more people receive the vaccination, until there is better understanding of the transmission of the virus and the effectiveness of the vaccine, social distancing remains the best way of preventing the transmission of the disease. Whatever Lent disciplines we adopt, for most people, they will be home-based.

The Alpha course begins on Shrove Tuesday. For many of us who have done an Alpha Course, the shared meal was a significant part, and this is not possible for the on line Alpha. But a delicious pancake at home

would set you up well for the first session at 7.30 in the evening!

This would then form a good basis for keeping Lent, and be a means of growing in faith.

During Lent and in the weeks leading up to it we are also invited to consider how we can live more simply, and put ideas into practice. If we can all be more aware of the impact that our decisions have on the environment, on our neighbours and on future generations, we can come closer to living a life that is truly sustainable. Small changes can have a big impact over time. We will also be supporting the CAFOD water appeal.

**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.



### SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

28 <sup>th</sup> February	CAFOD (Lenten Fast Day 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb)
2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Good Friday Collection for the Holy Places
25 <sup>th</sup> April	Diocesan Priests' Training Fund
16 <sup>th</sup> May	Mass Media
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Day for Life
27 <sup>th</sup> June	Peter's Pence
11 <sup>th</sup> July	Apostleship of the Sea
19 <sup>th</sup> September	Home Mission Sunday
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	CAFOD (Harvest Fast Day 1 <sup>st</sup> October)
24 <sup>th</sup> October	Mission Sunday
7 <sup>th</sup> November	Bishop's Maintenance Fund
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Sick & Retired Priests' Fund

