



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

Twelfth Night

The origin of the dates of celebrating the birthday of Christ, the date of the visit of the Magi (Wise men) and the Baptism of Jesus lie in the mists of history, and the actual dates themselves are among those Christian traditions about which there can be no absolute certainty. However, the facts of the birth of Jesus, that he was visited by travellers from the east and that he was baptised are recorded in the Scriptures, and are not in doubt.

Down the years of history the separate development of Eastern Christians from the West has resulted in different traditions regarding dates, although not of the events commemorated on those dates. In the West, there have been changes to the ways in which the different days have been celebrated. This year, for the first time, the Ukrainian Catholic Church is celebrating Christmas and Epiphany on the same dates as we are, as Ukraine is distancing itself from Russia. This is a contemporary example of how secular politics and national events can affect Church celebrations.

The Council of Tours in 567 established the season of Christmastide as lasting from Christmas to Epiphany (12 days), and giving us the idea of “12th Night” and “The 12 Days of Christmas” (although the song only dates from 1780 — very modern!).

From this grew up a number of practices and superstitions which were not directly ‘Christian’, but related to the Christian calendar. The 12 days were regarded as ‘Holy Days’, and hence holidays, not working days. Therefore the Monday after Epiphany was designated as ‘Plough Monday’; the day when the hard work re-commenced after the holiday.

Christmastide was a season for feasting, and 12th Night, being the end of the season of feasting, involved eating and drinking all that was left; it thus acquired a reputation for enthusiastic merriment, as depicted in Shakespeare’s play of that name. The same motive may have been the origin of the superstition that it is unlucky to leave Christmas decorations up after 12th Night. Superstition can have no place in religion, and luck does not enter into it at all.

In any case, in our calendar, Christmastide now continues until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which falls on the Sunday after the Epiphany, or if Epiphany falls on a Sunday (as this year), then on the Monday.

That means that this year we have the shortest possible Christmastide, and on Tuesday of this week we start the season of Ordinary Time. The Epiphany Crib will only be seen for two days, but please notice that it seeks to accurately reflect the account of the visit to Bethlehem of the Wise Men — to the house, where they saw the child (*Matthew 2:11*), not a stable or the baby.



That said, it was a joy to find a house in the parish with a crib in the front window, even if the ‘Kings’ arrived amidst the straw!

Each year we remember that the birth of Our Lord was in squalid conditions; far from the modern labour ward with all the medical interventions on hand, and our crib offerings are given to the Hope Centre, where support is given to the homeless of our town. We remember too that shortly after the visit of the Magi, the Holy

Family became refugees in Egypt, and we rightly remember and pray for the refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants of our own generation.

Please be generous in your gifts at the crib. Our refreshment donations are added to the crib offerings from the beginning of Advent until tomorrow; at the time of writing it stood at just over £500, for which, many thanks, but more would be better!

For your Diary

There is an ancient tradition that on the Feast of Epiphany, there is a sung proclamation of the dates of all the moveable feasts and Holy Days of the coming year. This originates from before the days of printed diaries, but today, while Easter and, maybe, Ash Wednesday get a mention, most others do not. The traditional musical chant for this proclamation was based on the Easter Proclamation chant, reminding us that the dates of most of the significant moveable

feasts are dependent on the date of Easter. That date is calculated in the same way as the date of Jewish Passover is calculated; determined by the first full moon after the spring equinox (when sunrise and sunset are exactly 12 hours apart, and thus day and night are of equal length).

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find these dates for 2024, allowing you to copy them into your diary at leisure.

We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

Notices of Interest

Repository: The Repository is open after Sunday masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. We still need more helpers especially after 9am Mass. I want to express a huge thank you to the loyal band who make the whole enterprise possible! Thanks to them & the great support from parishioners we again have an annual profit of over £1000 which is being donated to our parish charities & to the Hope Centre. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or Kath.healey.789@gmail.com

Bible Alive for January is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church. December is now sold out! There are, however, several small booklets of Walk with Me available for Advent. Please see the table in the Narthex.

Mrs Clare Sefton and family want to thank all who attended the funeral Mass for Paul. We also thank all who sent sympathy cards and had Masses arranged for the repose of his soul. Holy Mass will be offered for your intentions with grateful thanks.

Calling all Readers: The 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time is designated as the "Sunday of the Word of God", this year it falls on 21st January. One of the ways in which it is celebrated is in commissioning those who proclaim the Scriptures at Mass. There is a special celebration of the Word in the Cathedral at 3.00 in the afternoon, and all readers are invited to be there. For those who cannot come to that celebration, there will be commissioning at both Masses at St Gregory's.

The Secrets of St Paul: A 10 week course on Zoom run by Mission Northampton, starting on Wednesday 10th January 2024 and running until Wednesday 27th March 2024, 7.30-9.00 pm. (Break for Ash Wednesday & half term: Wednesday 14th & 21st February). Book at: <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/>

Prepare for Lent: To be thinking about Lent even before Christmas is over may seem to be getting ahead of ourselves, but on 31st January there will be a Zoom study on the Lent Sunday readings. Please email to Fr Andrew for the link, which will be available nearer the time.

Donorbox: St. Gregory's has now 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!



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. During cold weather, Adoration will be in the Sacristy.

Cathedral Foodstore: Our continued thanks to all who donate to the toiletries for the Foodstore. Please remember that the Foodstore is open to everyone who may be experiencing hardship. Food can be purchased at substantially reduced prices (as it now operates as a food larder) All that is required is a form of ID and a genuine reason for needing to use the larder. It operates between 10:15 - 12:15 every Thursday in the St Thomas Centre (behind the Cathedral).

Church Cleaning: Helpers are needed to clean the Church on the last Saturday of every month (**next - Saturday 27th January 2024**), after the morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones!

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 Hall, from 10am-11am.

Missio: All supporters have collected their calendars for 2024 or had them delivered. There are some spare ones in the Red Box on the table on the left hand side of the porch as you come into church. All they cost is your promise to say a prayer for those working on the Foreign Missions; if you want to make a donation towards this work see Dorothy (9am) or Alec (11am) or one of the clergy.

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!!

Fire Safety — Important notice. 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.

Bookings are open for Lux 2024. For school years 7 to 13. Our theme this year is Dive. See the website for more information and to book: <https://nymo.org/lux-dive/>. If you have any questions then please email info@nymo.org.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 8th January 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: 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: To be announced.

Mission Northampton: There will be a weekly Zoom course entitled "Secrets of Paul", lasting 10 weeks on Wednesdays starting on 10th January and running until 20th March (with a break for half-term on 21st February). There is a charge of £10 for the course, & visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/> to register.

Refreshment Donations:

Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

<i>From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:</i>	<i>The Hope Centre</i>
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

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 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

The Funeral Mass for Paul Sefton

Paul's funeral Mass was live streamed for members of his family and friends overseas, and is now available at this web address:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJQaqwu2A6M>

Nellie Carroll RIP

With sorrow we record the death of Mrs Carroll; she will be buried in Ireland. Mass will be said for her on Monday 22nd January at 10.30, and her body will be taken back to Ireland for burial. May she rest in peace.