



# 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

# Cleanse the Temple

The first two Sundays of Lent have a single theme in the Gospel in all three years of the lectionary cycle; on the first Sunday we read the story of the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness and on the second Sunday we read of the Transfiguration. For this Sunday and the next two, the three years take different themes. Year A (last year) the theme was water - we read about Moses striking the rock and giving the Israelites water to drink and the Gospel was the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. Next year (Year C) there is a theme of the compassion of the Lord, revealed in the Old Testament in the rescuing of the Israelites from Egypt, and in the mercy of God revealed in his allowing us to repent.

This year (Year B) we read the Gospel of the cleansing of the Temple from St John's account, which, although clearly telling of the same event, is set at a very different time from the same story in the other Gospels.

If we are seeking to know the true time-sequence, we must not be confused by the fact that three Gospel accounts place this event in Holy Week and only one places it near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Matthew and Luke both used Mark as their source, so cannot be treated as three separate witnesses.

Rather, we need to think ourselves back to the earliest days of the Church, soon after Pentecost. The Church spread rapidly — within a short period of time St Paul was travelling through Asia and to Greece, and groups of believers were to be found in most cities of importance across the Roman Empire. Part of their worship was to hear an account of something of the life and teaching of Jesus told by an eye-witness until it became necessary to have written records as the first generation of believers died; in many cases, by martyrdom. These stories were well-known; feeding many people, curing sick people, telling parables and, above all, the events of the

Passion, Death and Resurrection and his appearances in his risen body. However, they were, in the main, told as separate stories, not as a connected narrative. That John placed this one in a different place to Mark need not cause us any worry, but we can recognise that it was a well-loved story in the life of Jesus.

It can be seen, at face value, as a story of the underdog getting one over the corrupt ruler. This is a common literary theme found in many great stories. Robin Hood is a classic example. The Gospel writers want us to understand much more than that.

There are many interesting details in this account; for instance the presence of cattle for sale within the Temple was a relatively new development, arising from the widespread corruption of the Caiaphas, who had allowed it for his friends, although it had been previously forbidden. The whip that Jesus made could not have been anything too ferocious as all weapons were forbidden in the Temple; it would probably been little more than lengths of string. It is also interesting that Jesus seems to be much more lenient with the pigeon-sellers; they were providing sacrifice for the poorest people.

However, the real point of the story is the prediction of the Passion and Resurrection, and also giving us an understanding that St Paul was to develop about the body being the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

It is this understanding that gives it its place in the readings at this point in Lent. Last Sunday we were shown the vision of the glorified Jesus. Now he is telling us; the temple of his body will be destroyed, but will be raised up in three days.

This theme will be continued in the next two Sundays of Lent, and offer us a preparation for the experience of the Passion and the Resurrection.

# Cleanse the Narthex

Now we have a roadmap out of the pandemic, just as we prepare for Easter, we need to prepare for the end of lockdown, and it has been suggested that repainting and refurbishing the Narthex would be a good idea. Improved lighting has been installed, but volunteers to help wash down the walls and re-paint would be most welcome.

Cliff Snelling is co-ordinating this work. Offers of help should be addressed to him; alternatively make your offer to Fr Andrew by email, and it will be forwarded to Cliff. Many thanks to help.

You may have noticed the cleansing of the hedge around the church; this is a work in progress being undertaken by David Wilson.



# Notices of Interest

**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.

**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. St. Patrick's Day and Easter cards are now available.

**CAFOD "Walk for Water":** Johann Kastern has taken up the challenge, and would like sponsorship. Please see his page: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/walk-for-water1375>

**Masses and Covid security in Lockdown:** It is of the greatest importance that the church is a place of safety from the COVID virus, & while clergy & stewards do all they can to have systems in place, there is a responsibility on everyone to adhere to government regulations & maintain the safety of **everyone** as well as themselves in church. While 'bubbles' & households may sit together, there should be at least 1 metre distance separating those not in the same 'bubble' or household & must wear masks. We are still allowed to come to Mass; this is in part because churches are safe places. It is up to us to keep the church safe.

**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.

**Red Box/Missio contributors:** Please be aware that you may receive a phone call in the coming weeks about Gift Aid and other ways of supporting our Foreign Missions financially. The call will come from your Promoter or from Dorothy or Alec. Keep those on the front line in your prayers. God bless. Alec (622153)

**Being a Dynamic Catholic:** It is planned that through Lent there will be regular talks on the parish website and Facebook page based on a book entitled "Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic" by Matthew Kelly. This could form part of a Lockdown Lent discipline.

**Contact CAFOD:** CAFOD has a head office in South London, as well as offices based in each Catholic diocese around England and Wales, and also overseas.

**Email:** [cafod@cafod.org.uk](mailto:cafod@cafod.org.uk)

**Website:** <https://cafod.org.uk/>

CAFOD Head Office

Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JB

**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.

**SPUC:** You could save a life! There are two simple ways in which you could be a life saver; firstly, please consider joining the Northampton Branch of SPUC, you would be helping to end the shame of abortion in this country and protecting women; secondly, if you are unable to become a member of SPUC, you could offer your support by joining the prayer team. All you would have to do is pray for Pro Life causes, either as a group, or on your own at home. If either of these things appeal to you and you want to join the fight to protect unborn children and their mothers, then please contact William Currie; [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com) or 07393965643

**To Catholic Universe and Catholic Times readers in the parish:** Papers can be 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

**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)

**Exploring the Post-Lockdown Church:** The webinar series has been wonderful. There were 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/>

**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.

**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!

## Ask your MP to support an amendment to help stop

**forced abortion in Xinjiang, China:** There is evidence that women in the Uyghur Muslim community in Xinjiang, are being subjected to forced abortions. If you would like to email your MP to support the amendment, you can do this using a tool which set up on the Genocide Response campaign website, which can be accessed by visiting the link below: <https://genocideresponse.org/>

**Parish Finances:** Thank you to everyone who has been so very generous during this lockdown. Our parish finances are reasonably stable. Your generosity is much appreciated!

**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 March 2021, 3rd Sunday of Lent, Year B

In Genesis God promised to shower blessings on Abraham and his descendants. Today Exodus spells out the people's part of the covenant. In the Law given to Moses on Sinai the ten commandments are followed by 10 chapters of detailed rules about behaviour and ritual. Meanwhile, back at the foot of the mountain, the people became bored, and built a golden calf to worship!

The Psalm praises God's moral law, underlining the irony of worshipping a golden calf: God's decrees "are more to be desired than gold".

Paul began his letter to the Corinthians by telling them to stop squabbling among themselves. They should not divide into opposing groups, saying "I belong to Paul" or "I belong to Apollos", and so on. They must follow only the crucified Christ, who brought the Law of

Moses to completion by his command to love one another. He demonstrated this love by dying on the Cross – "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles".

In John's gospel Jesus cleanses the Temple at the beginning of his ministry, instead of towards the end, as in the other gospels. Jesus claims he will rebuild the Temple in three days, replacing it with himself and antagonising the Jewish leaders. From the start of John's gospel Jesus' death and resurrection are foreshadowed.

Psalm Response: **You, Lord have the message of eternal life.**

(Exodus 20: 1-17; Psalm 18(19); 1 Cor 1: 22-25; John 2: 13-25)

Chris Oliver



## Why Alpha

Pope Francis has asked that every parish and every Catholic have a missionary heart. In 2019, over 5,600 Catholic parishes and organisations around the world ran Alpha with an estimated 310,000 participants.

"Alpha, which I have had the opportunity to attend ... is a providential tool because it precisely tries to reach out to those who are far from the Church, who are indifferent to the faith. By means of a very simple and humane tool based on fraternity and friendship, Christ is introduced to them and enters little by little into their hearts..." (Archbishop Octavio Ruiz, Secretary for the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation — Vatican)

## Novena to St Joseph

Pope Francis has asked us to dedicate this year to St Joseph, and the Mill Hill Fathers invite us to share this novena leading up to his feast-day.

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March Day 1 Joseph, a beloved father**  
"Go to Joseph, what he says to you, do" (*Genesis 41:55*)

Our own St Joseph's Missionary Society of Mill Hill is simply one of many religious institutes, Confraternities and ecclesial groups inspired by his spirituality and bearing his name. These, and many churches worldwide dedicated to him, are testimony to the sense of Joseph's fatherhood felt everywhere in the universal Church.

Even though the above scriptural quote refers to Joseph of Egypt in the book of Genesis, nevertheless, the phrase 'go to Joseph' expresses the sense of trust that out of famine will come plenty, out of despair will come hope and out of the messiness of human history will come the assurance of God's continual presence in our lives.

*St Joseph, as our beloved Father, may you continue to protect us from harm.*

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March Day 2 Joseph, a tender and loving Father**  
"Where did that man (Jesus) get all this wisdom?" (*Matthew 13:54*)

Not only is Joseph a loving father for the whole Church, but he is also a tender, caring father to God's Son, Jesus. Such was his care for him that 'Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and with people' (*Luke 2:52*). In time, the model of Joseph's fatherhood would become for Jesus the template for God's Fatherhood.

Joseph's solid and faithful coaching and mentoring of the young Jesus would have nurtured the kind of wisdom that the people in the synagogue would have marvelled at as Jesus began his public ministry. Joseph's model of earthly fatherhood shaped Jesus' own understanding and teaching of God's Fatherhood as intimate, loving, caring and forgiving.

*St Joseph, help us experience God as a caring, tender and loving Father*

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March Day 3 Joseph, an obedient Father**  
"When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel commanded him (*Matt 1:24*)

How often did Joseph have to change his plans as a result of instructions given to him in dreams? How different would our salvation history have been had Joseph divorced Mary (*Matthew 1:19*)? Or remained in Bethlehem after Jesus' birth (*Matthew 2:13-15*)? Or returned to Judea after their flight to Egypt (*Matthew. 2:22-23*)? Even his long, arduous journey to Bethlehem from Nazareth was in obedience to a command from a Roman Emperor (*Luke. 2:1*). Moreover, Joseph was a devout Jew, obedient to all the prescriptions of the Law (*Luke 2:21-24*). Joseph's example and model of obedience taught the young Jesus the value of discerning and putting God's will ahead of personal self-interest or short-term gain. It is a model of selflessness and trust. That is why Jesus taught us to pray "thy will (not mine!) be done."

*St. Joseph, give us the wisdom to discern and obey God's will for us*

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March Day 4 Joseph, an accepting father**  
"[Joseph] took [Mary] as his wife." (*Luke. 1:24*)

Joseph's life was one of acceptance. He accepted Mary as his wife. He accepted to be the father of God's Son, to being uprooted and fleeing to Egypt, to resettling in Nazareth when it became obvious that returning to Judea would be too dangerous (*cf. Matthew. 2:22*). In accepting these things, Joseph was not just a passive recipient. He also embraced these sudden changes as opportunities to further God's divine plan. We may have little or no control over what happens to us. Joseph shows us that openness to God's grace can guide our response to what happens.

*St. Joseph, help us to accept and embrace life's challenges as moments of grace*

### Did you know that?

As a result of the pandemic, 150 million people are set to fall into extreme poverty and an additional 130 million people will be left hungry.

**Let's do something about it.**

### Did you know that?

The British Government has spent over £3.9 billion supporting climate-destroying fossil fuel infrastructure around the world since the Paris Agreement in 2015.

**Let's do something about it.**

### Did you know that?

African countries will pay out more than \$10 billion in debt repayments in 2020 and 2021 alone. More than half will go to firms such as HSBC and BlackRock, some of the richest companies in the world.

**Let's do something about it.**



## SECOND COLLECTIONS 2021

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

