



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 Power of Intercession

The weekly catechesis given by Pope Francis on evangelisation is continuing, and on 26th April he spoke of the witness of monasticism and the power of intercession.

In speaking of those who have witnessed to Christian truth, he spoke first of St Paul whose witness was through travel and great activity. Then he turned to the martyrs, those who remained faithful to Jesus in the face of great opposition, and ultimately were faithful to death.

He now turns to a different form of witness; not one of great physical activity, but of quiet prayer. Theirs is not a martyrdom of blood, but a deliberate renunciation of the lures of the world, and a life under the classic monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and whose ministry is to pray for the world.

There are those who say that the monastic life is a life wasted. Surely they would be better out in the community proclaiming the Gospel. To say that is to devalue the power of prayer. However, there is another witness that the monastic life offers, and that is of hospitality, and there are many who have come to faith simply by accepting the welcome in a religious house, and experienced for themselves the life of faith, and found in the calm of the cloister, that ‘still small voice’.

The patron of the missions is a Carmelite nun, Thérèse of Lisieux, who died at the age of 24, having lived nearly nine years in the Carmel at Lisieux in Normandy. Unlike the great traveller, St Paul, she only left her native land once, to go on pilgrimage to Rome and yet she is the great patroness of the missions. Pope Francis tells of how she found her vocation in her own words:

Let us listen to how she discovered her vocation — she wrote: “I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was burning with love. I understood it was Love alone that made the Church’s members act, that if Love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the Gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood. I understood that love comprised all vocations. [...] Then, in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my Love.... my vocation, at last I have found it.... my vocation is love! [...] In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love” (*Autobiographical Manuscript “B”, 8 September 1896*).

Pope Francis explains that the religious communities are: ‘the beating heart of the proclamation. Their prayer is oxygen for all the members of the Body of Christ, their prayer is the invisible force that sustains the mission.’

Contemplatives, monks, nuns: people who pray, work, pray in silence, for all the Church. And this is love: it is the love that is expressed by praying for the Church, working for the Church, in the monasteries.

Last week we were offered the inspiring story of the witness of the martyrdom of the Missionary Sisters of Charity in Yemen. Today we are invited to hear of St Gregory of Narek. Our Patron is identified as ‘the Great’, but there have been many other canonised saints bearing the name of Gregory!

He was an Armenian monk, who lived around the year 1000, who left us a book of prayers, into which the faith of the Armenian people, the first to embrace Christianity, is poured out; a people that, joined to the cross of Christ, has suffered so much throughout history. And Saint Gregory spent almost his entire life in the monastery of Narek. There he learned to peer into the depths of the human soul and, by fusing poetry and prayer together, marked the pinnacle of both Armenian literature and spirituality. What is most striking about him is the *universal solidarity* of which he is an interpreter. And among monks and nuns there is a universal solidarity: whatever happens in the world finds a place in their heart, and they pray. The heart of monks and nuns is a heart that captures like an antenna; it picks up what happens in the world, and prays and intercedes for this. And in this way they live in union with the Lord and with everyone. . . . As Jesus did, monks and nuns take upon themselves the problems of the world, the difficulties, the ailments, many things, and they pray for others. And these are the great evangelisers. Why do monasteries live closed up, and evangelise? Because with the word, for example, intercession and daily work, monks and nuns are a bridge of intercession for all people and for sins. They weep, even shedding tears, they weep for their sins — we are all sinners — and they also weep for the sins of the world, and they pray and intercede with their hands and heart raised up. Let us think a little of this — if I may permit myself the use of the word — “reserve” that we have in the Church: they are the true strength, the true force that carries the People of God forward, and this is where the habit comes from that people have — the People of God — of saying, “Pray for me, pray for me”, when they meet a consecrated man or woman, because they know there is a prayer of intercession. It will do us good — to the extent we are able — to visit a monastery, because there one prays and works. Each one has its own rule, but their hands are always occupied: engaged in work, engaged in prayer. May the Lord give us new monasteries, may he give us new monks and nuns to carry the Church forward with their intercession.

Indented paragraphs are quoted from the Papal Audience of 26th April 2023

Notices of Interest

Car Park Safety: Please remember that Parents/Carers are responsible for children in their charge whilst using the car park. Neither the Parish nor the Diocese are responsible for the safety of persons (adults or children), cars or their contents while in the car-park.



We welcome into the family of the Church
Nova Pretty Anala Kumbani,
Olivia Summer Hall
and Stanislaw Brablowksi
who received Christian Baptism recently.
Please pray for them and their families.

Repository: The Repository is open after every Sunday Mass wherever possible! We need more helpers prepared to stand for a few minutes after Mass - all stock is marked, so an easy task!
There is now a small display of items for 1st Holy Communion and Confirmation. *Contact Kath.healey.789@gmail.com.*

Bible Alive for June 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.

Food Parcels: Please contact Gregory Care (07434 669011) if you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving a food parcel.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham: 10th June 2023:



A coach will leave from St. Gregory's at 8am on Saturday 10th June, leaving Walsingham at about 5.00pm. **Cost £25 per person** (payable in advance). I understand that this is considerably more than in previous years, but the cost of coach hire has also increased dramatically. Please see poster for full details. To book, please speak to Caryl in the Office, or add your details to the list in the Lobby area and see one of the Clergy to pay.

Church Heating: Weekday Mass is now back in the church; Thursday adoration is in the Sacristy. We heat the church and hall on Sundays, but the extra cost of this will be more than the saving on weekdays.

Tots @ St Gregory's has restarted: tots and their carers welcome, 9.30-11.30 on Tuesdays during term-time £1 per adult!

Fire Safety – Important notice. Some years ago in response to instructions relating to the fire risk associated with votive candles, we had trays made to go under the racks where the candles burned to prevent the possibility of a naked flame falling on unlit candles below. Unlit candles **MUST NOT** be placed on these trays in any circumstances & must not be stacked one on top of another. This has been happening in recent weeks, and must not continue.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism Preparation: The next session will be on Monday 22nd May in the Sacristy at 7pm. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

First Holy Communion 2023: Congratulations to all children who have enrolled on the First Holy Communion programme. You will now have all the dates of sessions. Please try to attend them all, and please enjoy the course!

Confirmation in 2023: Those interested in Confirmation preparation should have spoken to Helen and will know the plan for the coming months.

The Sheppard Singers in Concert: You may remember the Shepard Singers gave us a beautiful recital a few weeks ago. On Sunday 14th May they will again be performing, this time at **Christ Church, Northampton, NN1 5LL.** The concert starts at 3pm – all welcome.

Are You Interested in the Diaconate? If so, there will be an information morning as follows: Sat. 13th May, 10am - 12.30pm, St. Mary's RC Church, 82 West Street, Dunstable, LU6 1NY. Entitled: 'Opportunity to find out more about the diaconate in our Diocese.' Please contact Fr. Tony on 01582 662710 for more details.

SPUC Pro Life Chain: A big thank you to the parishioners who joined a group of thirteen people who gave public witness last Saturday, on St Peters Way Northampton, to the ten million babies killed by abortion since the implementation of the 1967 Abortion Act. For two hours you received both the support & abuse of passing motorists as you publicly witnessed to the holocaust of the unborn that is taking place in the United Kingdom & around the world. Thank you again for standing up for the most vulnerable members of our society.

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 Church, from 10am-12pm.

The Diocesan Assembly: There will be preparation sessions for the delegates of our Pastoral area here at St Gregory's on May 24th and June 7th in church at 7pm.

Thursday Holy Hour & Adoration: Holy Hour is now Holy Two Hours, from 9am until 11am. This will continue while there are sufficient numbers to sustain it, and remains in the Sacristy for the time being.

Choir notes: Practice Thursday (18th May, Ascension Day) after evening Mass: 7:45 – 9pm. Come and join us as we strive to make our liturgy more inspiring. *Alec*

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)**

Parish Finances – It's that time of year again! There are still a few planned giving envelope boxes. If you have transferred to a standing order, but there is a box for you, please let Fr Andrew know.

Eucharistic Minister's Training: There will be a training course for both new and experienced Eucharistic Ministers running over three sessions in church on Wednesdays 10th May, 17th May and 31st May. It will run both in the morning at 11.00 and in the evening at 7.30. This will be followed by commissioning at the Masses on Sunday 11th June, the Feast of Corpus Christi. If possible, all Eucharistic Ministers should attend all three sessions, either in the morning or the evening. The ministry of giving the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful is important, & is a ministry of service. It is not a reward for the exceptionally holy. We all acknowledge that we are not worthy to receive Christ in the Eucharist, & the receiving is the greater honour than the giving. Deacon Michael is compiling a list of those willing to take up this ministry.

Sacred Heart Primary School, Luton, Head Teacher: The Governors of Sacred Heart Primary School are seeking to appoint an outstanding Head who will continue to lead this popular faith school and inspire its children, staff and families 'to be their best'. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future growth of our school by leading the strong and supportive team with enthusiasm, whilst continuing to improve and raise pupil achievement. The successful candidate will be a practising Catholic and be highly passionate about Religious Education and the Catholic Life within our school, working closely with the Subject Leader and our Parish Priest. See full details in the Narthex.

Prayers for Ukraine: Please continue to pray for an end to the war in Ukraine:

**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**

Scripture Readings 7th May 2023, 5th Sunday of Easter Year A

The Hellenists were Christian Greek-speaking Jews. A common way of resolving community arguments is schism: you go your way, we'll go ours. Significantly the early Christians managed to maintain fellowship by allowing each group to manage its own affairs. As Stephen's speech later shows, the Hellenists bitterly opposed the Jewish Temple authorities, who drove them out of Jerusalem, starting the spread of Christianity. The Apostles were not expelled, and continued their work, with many Jews including priests being converted.

The psalm praises the Lord's omnipotent power and kindness. Relying on His promises we can be confident he will rescue us.

Peter's letter continues encouraging persecuted Christians by reminding them that we are "a royal priesthood, ... a people set apart to sing God's praises". Every preface concludes with the

words: "every land, every people exults in your praise". At Mass we – as priests – offer all we have done during the week, our presence together in community, and our material gifts, as a sacrifice to confirm our allegiance to Christ, just as God's sacrifice of his Son showed his love for us.

In John's Gospel, after washing the disciples' feet and foretelling his death, Jesus emphasises his intimate relationship with the Father, saying "to have seen me is to have seen the Father".

Psalm Response: **May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.**

(Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 32(33); 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12)

Chris Oliver

Alpha continues on May 9th 2023 — This Tuesday

This week there is a double helping of Alpha, both on Tuesday evening as usual, and also all day on Saturday. The Tuesday session asks how God guides us, and on Saturday we explore the answer: that it is through the Holy Spirit that we are guided by God. Each one of us is created by God for a particular purpose, and he gives us all that we need to fulfil that purpose. We don't always perceive that purpose immediately, but it is only when we are fulfilling that purpose that we can find true contentment. We are pointed towards five ways: of Scripture, prayer to the Holy Spirit, the guidance of the Church, the community of faith, our own capacity for reason and recognising the signs of the times and the needs that surround us

First session:	March 14 th 2023:	Is there more to life than this?
Second Session:	March 21 st 2023:	Who is Jesus?
Third Session:	March 28 th 2023	Why did Jesus die?
Fourth Session:	April 18 th 2023:	How can I have faith?
Fifth Session:	April 25 th 2023:	Why and how do I pray?
Sixth Session:	May 2 nd 2023:	Why and how should I read the Bible?
Seventh Session:	May 9 th 2023:	How does God guide us?
Away-Day:	May 12 th /13 th 2023	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Eighth Session:	May 16 th 2023:	How can I resist evil?
Ninth Session:	May 23 rd 2023:	Why and how should I tell others?
Tenth Session:	June 6 th 2023:	Does God heal today?
Eleventh Session:	June 13 th 2023:	What about the Church?

The Healing Garden

The Healing Garden is a place of sanctuary for survivors of abuse and all those in need of healing. A place which we hope will provide a relaxing and peaceful setting to spend time, experience quietness and contemplation, to help improve well-being and reduce isolation. Although the Healing Garden was opened in May 2022, it remains an ongoing development – a garden is never complete – which mirrors our diocesan commitment to listening and responding compassionately to those with lived experience of abuse and its impact.

Some parishes are having a special collection today for this; we will be doing this on June 4th. Tuesday of this week is the national day of prayer for victims and survivors of sexual abuse.

Coronation Big Lunch at St Gregory's Church.

Don't forget to join us for the Coronation celebration, this Monday, 8th May (12:00 to 15:00)

A FREE and FUN day for the whole family, loaded with games and exciting activities for everyone to join in.

We encourage all to bring and share 'FINGER FOODS' which we will add to the delicious hot dogs that we will be providing for all.

(The hall will be open from 10:00 for food drop off).

There will also be tea and coffee as well as juice for all the children.

And don't forget make your 'fancy crown' out of recycled materials.

Let's build our community by making this day a special one for everyone!



**Gregory
Care**



Other Coronation Events

CORONATION TRAIL

From Friday 28th April 2023 to 9th May 2023 there will be fun Coronation trail for children in the healing gardens at the Cathedral Centre. The trail is free and papers can be picked up from the St Thomas Centre reception area.

Parking on Monday

The church car-park will be closed on Monday for the Big Lunch. The Church Council of the Anglican Church have given us permission to use their car park behind the Church Rooms on the other side of Park Avenue North, and opening off Ashburnham Road. If you need to park on the streets nearby, please be careful to avoid blocking access for our neighbours.

eden project

