



# 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

## Parishes - Flexible Communities

“The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelises, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. (*Pope St John Paul II, Christifideles Laici*) This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.”

(*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium §28*)

We are offered a number of descriptions of parish life in that paragraph:

- ✘ The presence of the Church in a given territory
- ✘ An environment for hearing God’s word
- ✘ An environment for growth in the Christian life
- ✘ An environment for dialogue
- ✘ An environment for proclamation
- ✘ An environment for charitable outreach
- ✘ An environment for worship
- ✘ An environment for celebration
- ✘ A community of communities
- ✘ A sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey
- ✘ A centre of constant missionary outreach.

Last week we considered the “community of communities”, within the context of the return from exile and the re-building of community in the Church.

In the first reading and the Gospel of today we are presented with events relating to hearing the authentic voice of the Lord. Elijah on Mount Horeb hears the ‘mighty wind’, but the Lord was not in that. Likewise with the earthquake and the fire. The true voice of the Lord spoke in the sound of a gentle breeze. In the Gospel, the voice of the Lord says “come” in the most improbable of situations, and all is well until Peter became frightened.

This clearly relates to the aspect of parish life that presents an environment for ‘hearing God’s word’. This happens in a number of different ways.

The first and most obvious is the proclaimed Word of God in Holy Scripture, read at every Mass. This is a fundamental part of the celebration of Mass — no Mass can be celebrated without the reading of the Scriptures. Equally, to arrive late such that you miss the reading of the Scriptures is not to have attended Mass.

We hear the voice of God in other ways too; through the ‘magisterium’ of the Church — that is to say, through the authority given to the Church to teach, and to speak with the voice of prophesy. We also hear the voice of God through our conscience, prompting us to goodness and discouraging us against wrong. We also hear the voice of God in the stillness of quiet; in our private reading of the Scriptures and in spending time with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

If we read the context of the first reading, we find that God gave a specific instruction to Elijah at Horeb: “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus” (*1 Kings 19:15*). He was given instructions to anoint the next generation of kings, and to call Elisha as his successor. He was to make preparation for the future.

This is always a responsibility. It was exactly this that inspired Pope St John XXIII in convening the Second Vatican Council, and inspired the Council in its deliberations and final documents. It is this that inspired successive Popes since Vatican II to speak of the New Evangelisation; and inspired the new Directory for Catechesis.

Pope Francis, in his *Evangelii Gaudium* quoted above speaks of the need to “review and renew” parishes, and the Directory for Catechesis suggests, three aspects in particular:

- a The parish as a ‘community of missionary disciples’, people with a living experience of the risen Christ who live out new relationships generated by him
- b Developing a ‘missionary mentality’, in which, open to the promptings of Jesus and of his Spirit, we may go out to the margins of society, and not be bound by the ways of the past
- c Celebrating the Christian life in a way that lives the Good News, and allows it to be shared by those seeking faith and a closer relationship with God and his Church.

To fulfil this, the parish will need to explore the virtue of flexibility; the ability to change and find new ways of being the Church in its particular place. Not because of fewer priests, but because we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Not because of necessity but because it is what God wants for us.



# Notices of Interest

**Confession:** Confession will be available between 9.30 am and 12.00 noon daily, but please email first to arrange a time to ensure that Fr Andrew is free.

**The Office:** Now that the Church is finally allowed to open, I am happy to see people during office hours. However, I must ask you to stay at the office doorway so that social distancing can be maintained & if possible, wear a face covering. Thank you. *Caryll*

**Bible Alive** for August 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. Please help yourself to a copy of The Crusader.

**For Parents and Teachers.** CAFOD have launched a National Assembly for schools. This amazing assembly can be used at home. It is all about CAFOD's 'Summer of Hope' and informs, inspires and encourages children, at a time when children may really need it. It is led by passionate youths and is a real must-watch! <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/Summer-hope-assembly>

**CAFOD Corona Virus online petition:** Out of love for our brothers & sisters please sign the online petition to our Prime Minister asking him to ensure the most vulnerable people are a priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home. Visit <https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1> to sign the petition online.

**Supporting CAFOD and the Hope Centre:** Please see the respective websites to make donations for CAFOD and / or the Hope Centre:  
<https://cafod.org.uk/>  
<https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

**The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC),** of which CAFOD is an active member has launched a nationwide appeal for funds. CAFOD is working in the most deprived areas of the world, helping local communities stricken by coronavirus to survive by:

- Delivering food to where it is needed most.
- Improving hygiene, handwashing and sanitation at the community and household level.
- Producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention.
- Training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns.

Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal> or use a CAFOD envelope and give through the parish. There will be an opportunity to give to the appeal this Sunday.

**Global Healing:** The Bishops' Conference have produced a film entitled "Global Healing", which can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/global-healing/global-healing-films/main-film/>.

It highlights the state of our planet & looks more closely at the Pope's encyclical letter on caring for our common home – Laudato si'.

**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.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** From 9.00 am to 12 noon on Thursdays, and then following Mass in the evening there will be Adoration until 8.30 pm.

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

**Forthcoming Alpha Course:** The next Alpha Course was due to start on Tuesday April 21<sup>st</sup>. In view of the current projections for the Coronavirus pandemic, we have to postpone this course. However, those who have registered will be kept informed about any change of date. Much the easiest way to enrol is through the web-site at <http://stgregory.org.uk/alpha/>.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next Baptism Preparation will be on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm in the Sacristy. **Please note that you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 0799908997 before you attend to book your place.**

**First Holy Communion – 2020:** The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established.

**Confirmation – 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparation Session:** The present course is suspended until the normal programme can be re-established. There is a provisional date for Confirmation of 20<sup>th</sup> November (Note change).

## Notice from the Diocese

**Online Donation:** The Diocese has an online donation facility on the main Diocesan website through Virgin Money Giving (link below). If you use this option we ask that you please indicate in the notes section **which parish, including the parish name and area (St Gregory's, Northampton)** that you would like your donation to be attributed to. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation <https://northamptondiocese.org/donate/>

**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)**

**Holy Communion and face masks:** Last week instructions were given that the wearing of face masks was to become compulsory in churches; this has now come into force; and you should wear one if you are not exempt. Stewards are not responsible for policing this, but may remind you that this now the law. However, you clearly cannot have your mouth covered while receiving Holy Communion! The Church's rule is that you consume the Host before you move away from the minister. Please remove your mask before being given the Host. Priest and Deacon wear face-coverings for your protection.

**Becoming a Catholic:** For adults interested in becoming a Catholic, the parish runs Journey in Faith process (RCIA). Also offered for adults who are Catholic, but have not received all the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist. Please speak to Alex Heath (07963032175) or Fr Andrew.

## Online Prayer resources during this time

Live-streamed Mass from the Cathedral  
<http://northamptoncathedral.org/live/>

Live-streamed Mass from Walsingham  
<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

EWTN  
<https://www.ewtn.com/tv>

Sacred Space guided prayer  
<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

# Scripture Readings 9th August 2020, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The books of Kings, Joshua, Judges and Samuel tell the story of Israel from entering the Promised Land until frequent unfaithfulness leads to exile. After Elijah successfully called on God to produce rain, and killed all the failed prophets of Baal, he fled from Jezebel's threat of revenge to Mount Horeb, ie Sinai. After Elijah recognises God in "a light murmuring sound" – "a sound of fine silence", God promises a remnant of faithful Israelites will survive, and gives Elijah more tasks.

In the psalm a prophet, after the return from exile, first listens to hear what the Lord has to say, and then reports the joyful future happiness revealed to him.

Paul shows the Romans just how great is his agony that most of the Chosen People have failed to recognise God in Jesus: he would be willing to give up even his own hope of salvation "if it could help my

brothers of Israel".

Matthew describes a small group who do recognise Jesus, and are willing to step out into the unknown to be with him. Jesus encourages them: they have "little faith", but it is enough for them to believe that he is "Son of God". (Matthew teaches what the disciples understood after the Resurrection, although Mark says "they did not understand".)

Psalm Response:

**Let us see, O Lord, your mercy,  
and give us your saving help.**

(1 Kgs 19:9,11-13; Ps 84(85); Rom 9:1-5; Mt 14:22-33)

Chris Oliver

## The Season of Creation

**Tip No. 77:** ***Solidarity with the Poor:** Oscar Romero said: authentic Christians are against the disorder of human beings exploiting other human beings.*

**Tip No. 74:** ***Living sustainably with creation:** Mother Teresa used this quotation: Learn from me, I am meek and humble.*

**Actions to LiveSimply :** Communication regularly (telephone) with of our , 'family in faith,' can cheer our predicament, or with eye contact using WhatApp, Messenger or Skype.

**Many thanks to Harry and Helen Charles who have offered to co-ordinate our parish's work towards the "Living Simply Award". Anyone who is interested is being involved in this, please contact them, or speak to Fr Andrew**

## Parish finances during lockdown

The first thing to say about our finances is an enormous 'thank-you' to the many people who have shown great generosity through these difficult months. This has not only been shown in a financial way, but also through the gift of time, particularly by those who have been acting as stewards. Behind the scenes and hidden from public gaze, the gift of time has also been given in prayer, and the whole work of the parish is underpinned by this prayer made by so many people in many different homes and other places. A further gift of time has been given in work in the garden and other running repairs to the church.

The financial state of the parish is far more healthy than had been expected, thanks to a significant increase in standing order regular donations, now over £550 every week, and to one-off donations during lockdown amounting to £950. We also received gift-aid money from the government of just over £4,000.

We have been able to save some money while the church was closed; we had a gas bill for £0.82; the cost of the pilot light!

The overall picture is that our reserve fund has slightly increased, while our current account remains stable. The increase in the reserve fund is because standing order payments go into this fund, so the good news is that our current account (which receives the weekly collection, donations and other money received in the church) has been able to cover our local expenses without drawing on our reserves.

During the time when the church was closed, we have had the annual service on the fire extinguishers, fire alarm, CCTV and intruder alarm carried out, and the filters in the heating system have been replaced,

so that when the church heating is turned on again in the autumn, the re-circulated air will be cleaner. We have also bought a 'fogger' which is a better way of sanitising the church.

However, there is a down-side to this, which is that our outside giving has taken a serious nose-dive. While in lockdown there have been no second collections, and we cannot be complacent about that. The Bishops' Conference have suggested the following dates for second collections through the rest of the year:

Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Holy Places (transferred from Good Friday)
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> October	Peter's Pence (transferred from 28 <sup>th</sup> June)
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	CAFOD harvest collection
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	World Mission Sunday
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> November	World Communications (transferred from 24 <sup>th</sup> May)
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> November	Day for Life (Transferred from 21 <sup>st</sup> June)
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Home Missions (Transferred from 20 <sup>th</sup> September)
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Sea Sunday (Transferred from 12 <sup>th</sup> July)

In addition to these collections, as was reported last week, the renovation of the rose garden at the foot of the crucifix is seeking sponsorship for CAFOD; gifts for this may be given using the ordinary CAFOD envelopes, but please write the word 'Rose' clearly on the envelope (not in the Gift Aid area, though please fill in this if you are a tax-payer).

Once again, thank you for your generosity.

## Further Congratulations to (young) William Currie

William went on a sponsored fast to raise funds for SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children), and last week he had raised £66,000! The figure has now exceeded £72,000! (The appeal was not

just to St Gregory's); he was recently appointed as the national fund-raising officer for SPUC, and has set himself a high standard for coming years!



**During this time of restricted public worship, please keep reading the Bible. The August “Bible Alive” is now available — see the note elsewhere in this newsletter.**

