



# 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

## Diocesan Assembly

Next Saturday around 300 people will converge on Thornton College just outside Milton Keynes from every parish in the diocese as well as from schools. The idea of this assembly comes from the conversations that took place in parishes last year in relation to the Synod.

While the global synodal purpose was to prepare for the meeting in Rome of the Synod of Bishops this coming October, in which every parish was invited to participate, the impact of this participation at a parish and diocesan level has been to open conversations which can lead to actions.

None of this is intended, or has the capacity, to change the doctrine or discipline of the Church. There are some who fear that this is the ‘hidden agenda’, and others who hope that this will be the outcome. What is intended is that within parishes and dioceses, we can look at how we live as the Church in our parishes and dioceses.

Between 4<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October this year the bishops will be prayerfully considering the reports which will have come from every Bishops’ Conference throughout the world. There will then be a time of reflection before the final synod in October 2024, after which it is expected that there will be a document from the Pope expressing the mind of the world-wide Church.

However, this is far from the whole story! The Diocesan Assembly will look at issues which particularly were raised within our Diocese and where we have the ability to make changes within the teaching and practice of the Universal Church. From that there may also be changes at a parish level in the way in which things are done.

“The purpose of the Synod... is not to produce documents, but “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to be nourished, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships... and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.”

*Preparatory Document for the Synod*

Bishop David has asked us all to be open to the Holy Spirit and not to see only our own agenda, but the action of God in the bigger picture, and to focus on the long term and on moving forward.

There are five particular issues which will be among those considered at the Assembly; encouraging women’s ministry, the role and life of the priest in the post-pandemic Church, finance and resources as we become a missionary diocese, outreach to marginalised people and lay participation are the decision-making structures. Beyond these five subjects there are doubtless other matters that will be raised. These five are interlinked at many levels, and are fundamental to how we live both as diocese and parish.

The starting point must be the focus Bishop David has set of becoming a missionary diocese, and therefore, for us, becoming a

truly missionary parish. Doing this requires, first of all, a conscious decision that this is the aim of the entire parish. This requires the investment of the entire parish; not just material and financial investment, but the investment of prayer and of time across the entire parish. And this aim is what determines the decisions that are made in the remaining four areas.

It is interesting that the question of ‘women’s ministry’ is stated with the objective of ‘encouraging’ because what is very clear in most parishes is that the ministry of women is vital and very obvious. In the ministry of the care of the housebound, in children’s liturgy, in Sacramental preparation, in the care of the materially needy, in this parish and probably in most parishes, this is almost entirely the work of women. It would be good to encourage more men to take a share of the work of ministry! What is lacking in the Church is a formal recognition of this ministry.

On January 11<sup>th</sup> 2021 Pope Francis specifically opened the ministries of Lector and Acolyte to women. He said: “certain ministries instituted by the Church are based on the common condition of being baptized and the royal priesthood received in the Sacrament of Baptism; they are essentially distinct from the ordained ministry received in the Sacrament of Orders.” Therefore they are opened to all lay people “on a stable basis”. How this is worked out in practice has not yet been resolved. However, we may hope that there will be better recognition of the vital ministry that women are fulfilling.

Opening appropriate ministries to lay-people and giving proper recognition to these ministries is necessary as priests are required to focus more on their proper priestly role of preaching, teaching and celebrating the Sacraments, especially Mass and Reconciliation. Pope Francis has been reminding priests of this throughout his pontificate, and as time passes, priests are more and more realising the truth, wisdom and necessity of this.

Outreach to the marginalised is fundamental to our mission. This must include those who are on the margins because of poverty or disability, and also those on the margins because of different lifestyles, some of which may be counter to our Christian teaching. Jesus reached out to just such people, and invited them to follow him. We need to find a way in which we can do the same. We must also ensure that those we do not see are not forgotten.

The art of delegation is not one taught in seminaries, but one which priests are having to learn, and with it comes the wider participation in decision-making within parishes. One of the desired outcomes of the synodal process is that there will be greater involvement of lay-people in the conversations that lead to the making of decisions. The synodal method is not the same as a committee or council. It is not by debate and voting, but by conversation backed up by prayer and coming to a common mind.



# 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.

**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!  
Contact [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com).

**Bible Alive** for July & August is now available - only £3.00! If you wish to purchase a copy, they are in the narthex as you come into church.

**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.

**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. It is important that at least two people are present throughout the time of adoration.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be in the Sacristy at 7pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Please note you will need to phone Deacon Michael on 07999808997 before you attend, to book a place.

**First Holy Communion 2023:** Enrolment for 2024 will be on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October after the 11.00 Mass. There will be a welcome to the children who are registered and their parents at the 11.00 Mass on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November. All sessions will be on Saturday afternoons at Sacred Heart, Weston Favell. Details, dates and times will be available at the registration. Please see the separate article on the way the programme works.

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

**Linda & Michael Fleming** would like to say a huge thank you for all the cards, messages, phone calls, flowers & gifts you sent to Linda following her operation. All is going well & she hopes to be up & running before much longer. Bless you all for your kindness, thoughtfulness & prayers. *Linda Fleming*

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

**Pilgrimage of Reparation & Prayer for the Sanctity of Life, to Walsingham:** Sat. 5<sup>th</sup> August, led by Archbishop Kevin McDonald. For details see the poster on the noticeboard, or go to [www.prolifepilgrimage.org](http://www.prolifepilgrimage.org). Please join in the 'great prayer for life' asked for by Pope Saint John Paul II.

**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.

**Save the Date:** There will be a fund-raising event for the Cathedral Foodstore featuring Fynnius Fogg on Saturday evening, September 2<sup>nd</sup> at the St Thomas Centre (the Cathedral Hall). More information later.

**National Catholic Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Walsingham:** Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July from 11am to 4pm. A day of faith & fun for all the family. Please see poster for full details.

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

**Dog lovers wanted!** Hearing Dogs for Deaf People urgently need volunteers to care for and help train their gorgeous puppies. For more information, ring 01844 348122 or email [volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk)

**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)**

## URGENT NOTE ON FINANCES

If you have transferred to standing orders and pay income tax please contact Fr Andrew (preferably by email) so that the Gift Aid can be linked to your donation. Claims can only be made for up to three years, so there is some urgency about this.

**Refreshment Donations:** Below is the schedule for refreshment donations through the year:

From the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:	<b>The Hope Centre</b>
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	<b>Gregory Care</b>
Through Lent and Eastertide:	<b>CAFOD</b>
Ordinary Time until the end of August:	<b>Refreshment Fund</b>
September until the Harvest collection:	<b>CAFOD</b>
After harvest until the beginning of Advent:	<b>The Bible Society</b>

## Shoulder my yoke and learn from me.

When a young horse is being trained to pull a plough it is harnessed together with an older and experienced horse, who will be a better teacher than any ploughman could be. The two horses will be under the same yoke – the beam that goes across the both animals.

So we are invited to be yoked together with Jesus to learn from him. We must learn good habits from him, and allow him to help us rid ourselves of bad habits. We must learn to walk in step with him, not set our own pace.

Jesus is the best teacher, both through what he said and what he did, and we can do no better than to learn from him. One of those lessons is the lesson of gentleness, one of the fruits of the Spirit, and a lesson that the world so desperately needs to learn as, from east to west, from north to south the news brings us devastating evidence of that need.

Another lesson is that of humility. Jesus did not force himself on people, but invites people to come to him. One practical way in which we can learn this lesson is in our own ministry of welcome, a welcome extended with gentleness and humility.

### 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.

### Assembly Insight

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation."  
(1 Peter 2:9)

### Prayer 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 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year A

From the fifth century BC, after the return from the exile, Zechariah's apocalyptic oracles look forward to the restoration of Israel, when all the nations will look towards Jerusalem. The Davidic king to be restored by God will bring release from captivity, but repentance must come first. Later Matthew misinterprets the idiomatic repetition of "riding on a donkey, on a colt" and has Jesus riding into Jerusalem on two animals at once (Mt 21).

The Psalm praises the Lord's kindness and care for creation and exhorts all creatures to thank the Lord.

Over the next few weeks Paul's letter to the Roman describes "life in the Spirit". Unable to "do the good I want!", Paul sees that we serve sin through our "flesh", our weak, earth-bound, human nature. But by coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, God's Son

## The Becket Festival This Week-end

This afternoon (Sunday) at 3.00 pm there will be the "Becket Lecture" given by Dr Judith Champ, from Oscott College on "The complicated Saint — Thomas Becket and English Catholics". This will be in the St Thomas Centre (The new Cathedral Hall). The Healing Garden will also be open with Garden Crafts. The festival will end with Vespers and Solemn Benediction in the Cathedral.

has enabled us to walk "according to the Spirit". The Spirit of God dwelling in us enables us to participate in divine life.

After Jesus' proclaimed the gospel in Galilee, he went on to preach "in their cities" but met opposition to his teaching, and he upbraided them for their lack of repentance. Those reputed to be wise do not understand, but those with the simple trust of children do. Learn from him, for his "burden is light".

Psalm Response:

**I will bless your name for ever,  
O God my King.**

(Zech 9:9-10; Ps 144(145); Rom 8:9,11-13; Mt 11:25-30)

Chris Oliver

## The Becket Festival This Week-end

While much of this year's Becket Festival is over, for those who are reading this on Saturday, please take note of the "hog-roast" on Saturday evening, at a cost of £10. Please book in at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/food-bank-fundraiser-hog-roast-and-family-bingo-fun-tickets-669684082117?aff=oddtcreator>

This is raising funds for the Cathedral Foodstore which we support through the gifts of toiletries, and is a vital part of our ministry to the needy. It should also be good fun!

## Growing Up Catholic

The date for enrolling in next year's preparation for First Holy Communion is Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October after the 11.00 Mass. The programme is one which we have been using for a few years now, and has proved to be popular with families and effective. It is, however quite different from the programmes in use even 10 years ago.

The first difference is that it honours the role of parents in being "the first of teachers of their child in the ways of faith" (*from the Baptism service*). Many parents who were themselves prepared for first Holy Communion fifteen or twenty years before remember little of what they were taught, and it is unreasonable of the Church to expect them to, and yet we ask them to teach their children. Our programme is designed to help parents in this responsibility, and to help parents themselves to grow in their own faith.

The second difference is that the sessions are big community events, where children and parents/carers meet together, and together explore the basic truths of our faith in an atmosphere of fun and discovery.

At every session there are handouts which are worked through, and then taken home, so that the conversation can continue in the coming week after the session.

The title of the programme gives away the underlying thinking: it is to help the children to grow up as Catholic Christians, with a living relationship with Jesus; not simply knowing *about* Jesus, but having a love for him, and understanding of him that is not just based on knowledge, but on a real experience of him in their life.

It is about community; the community of faith which the children are entering in a new way. It is a Christian equivalent of weaning; it is where the children are prepared to be given the solid food; the Bread of Life. It is where they can share in the meal with the grown-ups.

For the parents, it is a time when they can renew their own faith-commitment, as well as a very special time for parent and child to bond in a shared love for Jesus and faith in God.

## The Ministry of Welcome

### The Three Bees



**Belong**

**Believe**

**Behave**

Last week this diagram showed the traditional sequence but we saw that this does not accord with nature, where we belong to a family before we can know anything or have any idea about how to behave.

In the Synod agenda, we are asked to reach out to the marginalised, and almost by definition, they will have little or no understanding of a Christian way of life. Indeed, why should we expect anyone who has no faith in Jesus to follow his teaching?

Jesus did not impose conditions on those who followed him. He did not say that they could only follow him if they did this or stopped doing that. On the other hand, we know that many, when they got to know him, did change their life.

Our task, as missionary disciples, is to invite people to come to get to know Jesus. This is the main function of the Alpha course. It is an introduction to belonging by demonstrating that the family of Jesus, the family of the Church is a welcoming environment to be in.

Alpha is not the only way of doing this, but it is a tried and tested way, and although its origins were not in the Catholic Church, it is now being used more by Catholics than in any other denomination. It does not attempt to teach the whole of the Catholic Faith, nor does it deny anything we believe. It simply helps people to have a relationship with Jesus, and to know that they are loved by him, and that they belong. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit and the good example that we set.