



# 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

## LENT AS A PILGRIMAGE

The idea of pilgrimage is that of a journey — travelling from where you are to a destination. As Christians, it is our hope and prayer that our final destination will be heaven, and where we are now in our spiritual journey will be different for each one of us. Although we are journeying as a community and as companions, yet each one of us is making our own pilgrimage. Catholic spirituality does not seek to conform us beyond the recognition that the Sacraments are part of the basic help that God has given us for our journey.

Lent is a season in the Church’s year that is given to us as further help, but that help can only be received if it is a time when we make progress on our pilgrimage towards heaven.

At the same time it is a model of our entire pilgrimage. It began for us in the Western Catholic tradition last Wednesday; for the Syro-Malabar community it began on Monday — this is due to different way of counting the 40 days of Lent. For both of us it began with the imposition of ash which has been ground to dust.

The symbolism of ash is connected to repentance, but also speaks to us of our creation: “The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” (*Genesis 2:7*)

The beginning of Lent speaks to us of the beginning of our human life, but there is a further symbolism because the ash is placed on our forehead in the form of a cross, exactly as we were marked with the Sign of the Cross at our Baptism, the beginning of our Christian life. This is truly the beginning of our spiritual pilgrimage towards heaven.

The destination of Lent is, of course, Holy Week and Easter. It is the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus; the unique act which gives us our Christian Hope. It is the Resurrection that makes the Christian Faith the source of our hope for eternal life. St Paul writes of this:

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

(*1 Corinthians 15: 14-19*)

Easter is the greatest of all the Christian festivals because it speaks of this unique act of Christ. All religious leaders, prophets, gurus, preachers — they have all been born. They all taught; many of them have proclaimed great truths. They all collected followers, and many of them suffered opposition and persecution; some were put to death. But uniquely, only Jesus has risen from the dead, and Easter is the feast of that unique miracle.

The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus took place at the time of the Passover festival, and the Church keeps that connection by calculating the date of Easter in a similar way to that of Passover: the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. This means that it can vary by as much as five weeks. (Because of different time-zones, this is a slightly simplified explanation, and because the Jewish calendar is based on the moon, not the sun, the matching of Easter to Passover is not always perfect.)

In between our birth and our resurrection there lie the weeks of Lent. This week we recognise the reality of temptation in our life, and learn from Jesus how he dealt with it, and therefore how we too can deal with it.

Next week we will hear of the experience of Peter, James and John on the mount of Transfiguration; how Jesus was seen in his glory; a preparation for seeing Jesus in his agony on the Cross and also for seeing the transfigured Jesus in the breaking of the Bread. We too see the transfigured Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent vary through the three-year cycle of Sunday readings, but give us teachings of Jesus to help us to keep our life on course as we make our pilgrimage towards heaven. Jesus must be our constant companion on our journey (companion means sharing bread, and this highlights the importance of being at Mass more frequently during Lent).

With him on Palm Sunday we enter Jerusalem; his earthly pilgrimage is nearing its end. After Maundy Thursday we come to Good Friday, the day Christ died on the Cross. We too must die to this mortal life, but through our being joined to Christ in Baptism, we have this wonderful hope of eternal life with him in heaven. “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” (*Romans 6:8*)

At Easter our Lent Pilgrimage comes to its glorious close, and by then we pray we may have advanced on our actual pilgrimage towards heaven.



# Notices of Interest



We welcome into the family of the Church  
Rahela Maria Petrila  
who received Christian Baptism recently.  
Please pray for her and her family.

**Repository:** The Repository is open after Sunday Masses for the sale of cards and religious goods. Priests Calendars are available, £5 each. Any queries or volunteers to 01604 629103 or [Kath.healey.789@gmail.com](mailto:Kath.healey.789@gmail.com)

I have had notice of the availability of the new Weekday and Daily Missals from about April 27th. The Weekday Missal has the Masses for each day, cost £55.00 and the Daily Missal has all the Masses, cost £69.00. I can pre-order or wait till they appear. There was no shortage of the Sunday Missals so no need to panic! *Kathleen Healey*

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

**Divine Will Prayer Group:** The Divine Will prayer group will take place via zoom on the first Thurs of every month 7pm, with the remaining Thursdays of the month at Our Lady's Great Billing 7pm. All welcome. Those wanting to join the zoom meeting message Mark on 07724 337196.

**Public Witness to Oppose Kim Leadbeater MP's Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill:** Please join members of SPUC Northampton between 1am & 1pm Sat. 5<sup>th</sup> April, St Peters Way, in a public witness to oppose legalised assisted suicide & the above bill currently going through Parliament. It is important that MPs realise that there is strong opposition to this bill. It is not a premature death our terminally ill brothers & sisters need but good palliative care. For further details contact William at [wpcurrie@btinternet.com](mailto:wpcurrie@btinternet.com) or 07393965643.

**National Novena to St Joseph:** 10<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> March: Every year, the Mill Hill Missionaries prepare for the Feast of St Joseph with a special Novena of Masses & prayers to ask for God's blessing on their Society's missionary outreach, and for the intentions of all those who support their work. Mass is celebrated each day at St Joseph's Church in Maidenhead, 10am, except Sunday when it is 11am. Masses can be followed on Zoom, via the Mill Hill website: [www.millhillmissionaries.com/novena](http://www.millhillmissionaries.com/novena). You are welcome to send petitions etc to [novenamhm@gmail.com](mailto:novenamhm@gmail.com).

**The rotas for Readers and Extraordinary Ministers** have been issued for the period March to May 2025. Hard copies are available in the sacristy if required.

**Bl. Cyprian Tansi Prayer Group** prays together online via Skype and by telephone and on the first Saturday of the month, here in the Hall: 10.00 am-12.00 pm.

**Ceili Dancing** is ongoing in the Church Hall every Wednesday evening, 7.30-8.45pm. Everyone welcome to join our friendly group. To find out more phone Pat on 07710624921, or just turn up!

**Tots @ St Gregory's:** If you have the care of a baby or pre-school child on Tuesday mornings join us in the church hall from 9.30-11.30. Just £1 for you & any number of children & includes snacks for the children & yourself - excellent value for money! We run throughout term time. Looking forward to seeing you!

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**Baptism Preparation:** The next session will be on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 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 2024/5:** First Holy Communion 2025 Registration is now complete, and there is no more space this year.

**Confirmation in 2025:** Apologies that this date was missed; this was caused by unavoidable circumstances. Please will any wishing to enrol please email to [childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk](mailto:childrens.liturgy@stgregory.org.uk) to register that you want to enrol for the next Confirmation. The Confirmation will be in the afternoon of Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup> 2025.

**Fire Safety:** Please be careful with the votive candle stands, and especially please ensure that children are safe. 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.

**Gregory Care — Jumble Sale/Table-top sale:** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March. Come along a pick up a bargain! Any donations for this can be left at the back of the Church in the box marked 'Sale'.

**Gregory Care — Unity in Diversity Event:** Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The first Unity in Diversity is run by our Eastern European friends and will be show-casing their cultures for us through food and entertainment. This is free, but numbers are limited so please register your interest by contacting Gregory Care (07434669011) to avoid disappointment.

**Choir Notes:** our next practices, as we prepare for Holy Week, are at 11-12 am on Saturdays March 15, 22, [not 29] and April 12 [not 5<sup>th</sup>]. Easter Sunday is April 20. *Alec*

**'A Journey of Hope' Lenten Accompaniment Prayer:** For the Jubilee Year this Lent, there is an opportunity of a retreat in daily life, on Mondays from 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Begin or deepen your prayer life, get to know the Scriptures better, and above all, grow in faith and in love for the Lord who loves you. You will receive weekly one-to-one support from an experienced prayer guide on zoom. To find out more, go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/northamptondiocese/1506153>

**Church Cleaning:** Helpers needed to clean the Church on last Sat. every month, after morning Mass. All welcome, especially younger, more energetic ones! This month, March 29<sup>th</sup>, due to a retreat that day, cleaning will be done in the evening by the retreatants.

**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)**

**Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham:** This year our diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham takes place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June. The pilgrimage will begin with Mass at the Basilica in the Catholic Shrine at midday followed by lunch & at 3pm pilgrims process from the Shrine, on the holy mile to the Abbey Grounds for the final service. Parish groups are welcome to attend & encouraged to bring parish banners with them for the procession. All are welcome.

**Wintershall:** Sacred Heart parish are looking at a visit to Wintershall, to experience The Story of Jesus, brought to life. Details to follow but keep the date free – 21<sup>st</sup> June!

**Palestinian Olive Wood Sale:** We have received a message of thanks for the magnificent sum raised of £1,200, which will be a massive support to the Christians of Bethlehem.

**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:	The Hope Centre
From the Second Sunday in ordinary time to the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday:	Gregory Care
<b>Through Lent and Eastertide:</b>	<b>CAFOD</b>
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

## Prayer for Peace for Ukraine, the Holy Land and all places of strife

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.

# Scripture Readings, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year C, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Deuteronomy, the “second law”, repeats the law given on Sinai. It describes events just before the Israelites crossed the Jordan from the desert into the Promised Land. In today’s reading Moses uses an ancient formula to prescribe how the first fruits of the harvest are to be offered in gratitude for the gifts God has given to a landless people. As with our offerings during Mass, the priest’s role is to begin the celebration by setting the offerings “before the Lord your God”.

The Psalm describes benefits of trusting in God: protection from evils and terrors as God goes with us in our distress.

Paul has lamented to the Romans that the works and rituals of the Mosaic Law did not bring Israel righteousness, and they cannot justify us, that is make us right with God. Everyone can be saved,

but only by confessing faith in God from their heart.

In Luke’s gospel we hear how, after his baptism, Jesus was tempted in the desert. The devil’s power is real. Perhaps Jesus was often tempted during his ministry to use lavish gifts, force or exhibitions of supernatural power to convince people. But Jesus remained faithful to his Father. The only way to God is by service and suffering. The devil is routed for now, but will return during Jesus’ passion.

Psalm Response: **Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.**

(Deut 26:4-10; Psalm 90 (91); Romans 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-13)

Chris Oliver

## Chant used for the Communion procession at 11.00



If you have not already, please register as soon as you can, and include your home address, telephone number and email address in the ‘About You’ tab and ask for the newsletter in the ‘Your Church’ tab. It is helpful if you can indicate which Mass you normally attend.

[www.caspar.church/me?ID=56067](http://www.caspar.church/me?ID=56067)

**You will need internet access for a security code which will be sent to you by email. (Check junk/spam and set CASPAR not to be treated as spam.)**

The screenshot shows the CASPAR website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'About You', 'Your Family', 'Your Skills', 'Your Church', 'Your Diocese', and 'Support'. Below these, there's a section for 'Church(es) - you regularly attend' with an 'Add another Church' button. The main content area is titled 'St Gregory the Great Church, Northampton' and is divided into 'Liturgies' and 'Newsletters'. Under 'Liturgies', there are checkboxes for various days and times: Sunday (9:00am, 11:00am), Wednesday (9:00am), Thursday (7:00pm), Friday (9:00am), Saturday (9:00am), and Holy Day (7:00am, 9:00am). Under 'Newsletters', there's a checkbox for 'Newsletter for St Gregory the Great' and options for 'SMS', 'Email', and 'No'.

**CASPAR**  
“Your Church”  
tab.  
Please sign up.  
To receive the newsletter at home; choose the ‘email’ box at the bottom of the window.

You can also indicate which Mass you usually come to.

# Pilgrimage in Holy Year

Holy Years are about pilgrimage; to the Holy Land, to Rome, to other Christian religious centres and to local shrines. There are a number of particular opportunities for us in this Holy Year.

There will be four specific Parish Pilgrimages. The first is on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, to the shrine of Our Lady at Aylesford. The second is on June 14<sup>th</sup>, to the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. The third and fourth have not had a date fixed yet, and rather depend on the weather through the summer. While the first two involve a coach journey, the third and fourth will be walking pilgrimages, one to the shrine of Our Lady at Billing and the other to the Cathedral. Sacred Heart parish are also organising a coach trip to the Wintershall “The Life of Christ” drama, advertised elsewhere in the newsletter.

The Aylesford pilgrimage is being organised by Gregory Care. It is suitable for people of all ages, and will set off from St Gregory’s at 8.00 am on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, returning at about 8.00 pm. More information about Aylesford can be found on the parish newsletter for 23<sup>rd</sup> February. (<https://stgregory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/23rd-February-2025-Web-Version.pdf>) Aylesford is situated on the river Medway in Kent, and is very beautiful. The likely cost will be in the region of £20.00. Please register your interest with Catherine or Carole or text the Gregory Care phone 07434669011.

Walsingham is our National Shrine to Our Lady, and it is surprising that many who regularly make pilgrimage to Lourdes, Medjugorje or Knock have never visited our own national shrine. The river Stiffkey, on whose banks the National Shrine stands is not as

impressive as the Medway, although conservation work being done both upstream and downstream may well help as it passes through Walsingham. The English shrine to Our Lady is one of the oldest in the world; long pre-dating Lourdes, Medjugorje and Knock by many hundreds of years, and although destroyed by King Henry VIII, it has been restored by both the Catholic Church and the Church of England and the Orthodox also have a church there, so it is an important sign of ecumenical co-operation. The pilgrimage on 14<sup>th</sup> June is our Diocesan Pilgrimage and will be led by Bishop David, and an important occasion for the diocese to be at prayer together. It has the theme of the Holy Year, “Pilgrims of Hope”. There will be a coach leaving St Gregory’s at 8.00 am.

The Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour houses one of a small number of authorised copies of the original icon which is in the church of S. Alphonsus on the Via Merulana in Rome. These were authorised by Pope Pius IX in 1866, and sent all over the world. The fact that our diocese has one of these copies, just 16 years after the diocese was founded is a significant part of our diocesan history, whose 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are celebrating this year. Our walk will try to avoid the roads, and use footpaths.

Our Cathedral is the Mother-Church of the Diocese, called a ‘cathedral’ because the Bishop has his chair (Cathedra) there. The walk to the Cathedral will cross the racecourse, but otherwise be on roads. This will probably be on a Friday morning in the summer as there will be a special pilgrimage Mass at midday every Friday in the Cathedral.