

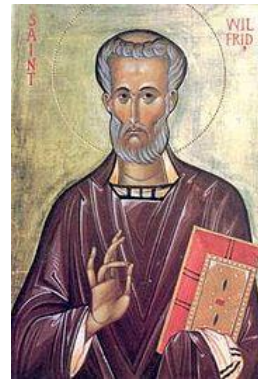
Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic

30th August 2020

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Feast Day of Saint Gregory the Great



Pope and Doctor

c. 540 - 604

September 3rd

Patron Saint of musicians, singers, students, and teachers

Why has Gregory been given the title 'Great'? Perhaps it is because he did some truly remarkable things, the legacy of which remain today, well embedded in our Catholic lives.

It was Gregory who sent a large missionary party across Europe and converted Saxon England to Catholicism, establishing a culture that endured for almost a millennium, he wrote a theological work that was used for centuries by thousands of bishops to help them become more fatherly, Gregorian chant is named after him; he is one of the four Latin Fathers of the Church; he was the first pope to use "Servant of the Servants of God" as a papal title; he alone preserved the memory of Saint Benedict with a biography; he made revisions to the content and structure of the Mass which are part of the liturgy until today; and he was the most impactful pope of the long span of

centuries from the 500s to the 1000s.

These accomplishments thus truly merit the title *Great* with which Saint Gregory has been justly crowned by history.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great was born into a noble Roman family with a history of service to Church and empire. The family home was perched on one of Rome's seven ancient hills, the Caelian, which Via San Gregorio still cuts through today. His father was a Roman senator, although at a time when Italy was in decline and the imperial government was based in Constantinople. Gregory received an education in keeping with his class and became the Prefect of Rome, its highest civil position, in his early thirties. In 579 he was chosen by the pope as his emissary to the emperor's court in Constantinople, primarily to seek the emperor's assistance in protecting Italy from the Lombard tribes that had long ago overrun her.

Gregory was elected the bishop of his home city in 590 and was thus obligated to abandon the quiet life of a monk, which he had been living with some friends for a few years in a small monastery near his family home. In numerous letters which have fortunately been preserved, Pope Gregory, soon after his election, bemoans the loss of his monastic solitude, peaceful recollection, and life of prayer. But he had only been a monk for a few short years. Gregory's skills as an administrator, honed in his long years of prior civil and church leadership, proved valuable when he sat on the Chair of Saint Peter. He drew into the orbit of papal authority the bishops of France and Spain who had, until then, been operating somewhat autonomously. He secured the allegiance of Italy's northern tribes to orthodox Catholicism, compelling them to abandon the counterfeit Arian Christianity they had held for centuries. And Gregory made the fateful decision to personally organize and promote the great, and phenomenally successful, missionary journey of Saint Augustine of Canterbury to the Kingdom of Kent in England.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great's legacy in liturgy, pastoral doctrine, and miracles left a deep mark on medieval Europe and beyond. The Council of Trent in 1562 mandated the suppression of votive Mass cycles for the dead or for any other need. But the Council Fathers made one exception: The Mass of Saint Gregory, a cycle of thirty Masses on thirty consecutive days for the release of a soul from purgatory, were not suppressed. Almost a thousand years after his death, Gregory's memory was too venerable to suppress. Gregory was an encourager of the encouragers, a bishop who modelled, strengthened, and explained how and why his fellow bishops should be fathers first and lords second.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great, your example of holy leadership, of scholarly practicality, of balance between universal and local concerns, helps all Christians to weigh their many duties in a proper balance and to choose correctly what matters most to God and their own salvation.



Today is Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

(OF) Readings for today are: -

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| First Reading | Jeremiah 20: 7-9 |
| Responsorial Psalm | Psalm 62 |
| Second Reading | Romans 12: 1-2 |
| Gospel | Matthew 16:21-27 |

"If Anyone Wants to be A Follower of Mine, Let Him Renounce Himself"

In last Sunday's Gospel, Jesus called Peter "the Rock" on which He builds His church, the Keeper of the keys of heaven, the ruler who will bind and loose. Today Jesus calls Peter, not His rock but "Satan", an obstacle in the Lord's way. What has happened? How does Peter go from 'rock' to 'Satan'? the clue is in the words spoken by Jesus "Get behind me, Satan. You are an obstacle in my path. The way you think is man's way, not God's.

Last Sunday Peter professed his faith in Jesus "You are the Christ". But Peter thought that "The Christ" meant glory, conquest, and a kingdom: but when Jesus tells him that he is on his way to Jerusalem to be killed by the scribes and the Pharisees, Peter is bewildered and shocked: "Heaven forbid, Lord this must not happen to you. The Christ comes to free us from our enemies."

Peter also imagined himself sharing in the glory of the Kingdom, he was now the keeper of the keys. **Peter wanted a Christianity without the cross.** But Peter the Rock got it wrong.

No one doubts Peter's love for Jesus, his passionate desire to serve and protect Jesus. Peter is always enthusiastic, always volunteering, but often getting things wrong, and so getting in the way. Instead of a rock of support, he becomes an obstacle. (SATAN is the Hebrew word meaning an obstacle, an adversary, an opponent.) Very soon, when Jesus is captured, Peter the Rock will deny 3 times that he ever knew Jesus. A servant girl of the High Priest will ask him "Aren't you one of his disciples? Didn't I see you last night with him in the garden?" And Peter will answer "No. I've never set eyes on him!"

After the resurrection Jesus met Peter on the shores of Galilee and asked him 3 times "' Simon Peter, do you love me?' Peter replies, 'Lord you know everything, you know I love you' 'Feed my lambs and my sheep.'

It is LOVE Jesus wants, more than anything. Then Jesus said 'When you were young Peter you would put your own belt on and go wherever you will. But when you have grown old, someone else will put a belt round you and take you where you do not want to go' And by these words Jesus indicated how Peter would die."

Yes, Jesus does know everything. He knows our future. When Peter saw the cross, the Romans had prepared for him he said he was so ashamed to die as did his master, so he asked to be crucified upside down. Peter passionate beyond limit to the end.

So eventually he learnt the lesson of the cross. He made mistakes: he recognised his weaknesses: but he kept on trying. Peter a passionate fallible human being, loved by Christ.

Today we ask St Peter to teach us that being a Christian involves the cross.

Christianity is a realist religion. It does not pretend that life is easy. Life *is* unfair. The waters are stormy. Faith does not offer an escape route: it offers something better: it empowers us to shoulder our crosses and transform them into Easters, into victory. Jesus conquered the cross and helps us to carry ours. Faith is about a God who became one of us in order to experience our pain and suffering, our shattered dreams and sickness, and eventually death and to conquer them all

The first step in understanding the cross is to UNDER-STAND it. Stand under it: shoulder it. If we run away from a cross, it only drags at our feet. Our Lady **stood** with courage at the foot of the cross. She UNDER-STOOD the cross

"Take up your cross daily and follow me" Jesus said. Follow me INTO EASTER. Christianity is not about the cross FULL STOP: but the cross DEFEATED. Face up to the challenges of each day. No need to go and look for crosses.: they come sure enough. Just accept, shoulder them and victory will come.

When you were young Peter you did your own thing. You had your own dreams and ambitions. All good. But youthful dreams are often shattered: our plans don't always work out.

At the end of his life Peter accepted the cross, an upside down one. His youthful dreams were not fulfilled.

When the days of sorrow come, we too must remain faithful, as firm as a rock. Unanswered prayer is not a sign that our faith is weak, but that our faith is being tested. Courage and patience will carry our cross into Easters.

"Lord help me to carry my crosses as you carried yours, with faith and strength, knowing that I will be led by You to my eternal Easter"



Today is the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

EF readings for today are: -

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| Introit | Psalms 73: 20, 19, 23 |
| Epistle | Galatians 3:16-22 |
| Gradual | Psalms 73: 20, 19, 22 |
| Gospel | Luke 17:11-19 |

"Almighty and everlasting God, grant unto us an increase of faith, hope and charity: and that we may obtain what Thou dost promise, make us love that which Thou dost command."

Last Sunday, the readings reflected on the importance of charity and how charity fulfils the law. Again, this Sunday, we are confronted with the role of the law in the Christian faith. Although it might be tempting to believe that the relationship of the old Law with the New Covenant was merely a first-century problem, it still impacts our lives as Catholics today.

St. Paul notes that the Mosaic Law came centuries *after* the covenant promises God made to Abraham. This means that the promises, not the Law, are the basis of the Old Covenant. It is not the Law that gives life, but the promises from God. The purpose of the Law was to show that all are under sin; and it is the *promise* that justifies, and it takes another promise of God — this time "by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:22) — to save us from our sins.

Today we read of Christ's healing of ten lepers. Jesus tells them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," and on their way, they are cleansed of their leprosy. Why did Jesus not say, "Be cleansed" as he did in the case of another leper, instead of commanding them to show themselves to the priests? It was because the law gave directions to this effect to those who were delivered from leprosy [cf. Lev. 14:2]. Jesus commanded them to go as being already healed so that they might bear witness to the priests ... [that] they had been delivered from their misfortune by Christ's willing that they should be healed".

In this healing, Christ is showing the relationship between the Law and his New Covenant: The Law is necessary to show our transgressions, but it is only in Him that we are cleansed of those transgressions. This is why the early Church retained the moral laws, such as the Ten Commandments, which were still necessary that we might know that we "have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and in knowing of our weakness, we might turn to Christ for healing. The Church then created new ceremonials that focused exclusively on turning to Christ and His saving mercy.

Sunday's Gospel has another lesson for us: gratitude. Only one leper returned to Christ to thank him. We receive healing from Christ from the sacraments, particularly the Sacrament of Confession. Do we thank Him sincerely for that healing, or do we go on with our lives as if nothing has happened? It is only by receiving healing *and* giving gratitude to God that our faith can make us whole.

Mass Intentions

Please remember Canon Michael continues, as he has throughout the pandemic, to say daily Mass, if you have any intentions for Mass please put these in an envelope and pop through the letter box, or place them on the collection plate at the end of Sunday's Mass.

This Week 30th August – 6th September 2020

Sunday 10: People of the parish
12: Intentions of Pat Turnbull

Monday: Thanksgiving

Tuesday: Harry Richardson

Wednesday: First day of School (OJID) and all those returning today

Thursday: Wellbeing of Mona Richardson

Friday: Holy Souls

Saturday: Watchorn Family

Sunday: 10: People of the Parish
12: Daniel McQuillan

Mass is said at approximately 10.00am each weekday

Please remember in your prayers the sick of the parish and all those who have recently died

We pray for all those, teachers and pupils returning to school this week, that they may have a successful, happy, healthy, and safe start to the new school year.



Midday Mass

We welcome Fr Philomeno who is saying the midday Mass for us today and is asking for volunteers for pro-life work

Re-Opening Churches

Please see the Diocesan Website for information regarding churches which are open.

St Wilfrid's is to be amongst the churches to reopen in phase 6, in order to do this safely we need as many volunteers as possible, the roles to make the opening a success are varied - cleaners, stewards, ushers.

Please give your name and contact details to Canon Michael or to Veronica Georgeson, Health and Safety representative for St Wilfrid's

The re-opening of St Joseph's for Mass on Sundays has been a great success. Canon Michael has been delighted to see so many familiar faces and to have welcomed many new ones. There is still no need to pre-book a place for Mass as numbers so far have been accommodated with relative ease.

Please remember to bring a facemask with you to each Mass, this must be worn throughout the service, removing it only to receive Holy Communion.

Sanitise your hands, on entry to the church, prior to receiving Communion and as you exit church.

If you wish to be part of the 'Trace and Track' programme please remember to bring with you an envelope containing your name, contact details, the time and date of your visit. Place this in the box as you enter church, the box will be sealed at the end of the day and only opened if the need arises, otherwise it and all contents will be destroyed, in line with Data Protection, after 21 days.

Please follow the one way system displayed in church and heed the instructions given by the ushers, it will feel strange and over regimented not to be able to attend church in the same way as we used to, but all the guidance is in place for everyone's safety.

In order to comply with government advice, and to maintain a safe environment, we ask that you do not stop to chat with friends as you enter or exit church, keep the system flowing smoothly by keeping any important conversations to be held outdoors at a sensible distance from the exit and entrance routes. Thank you

Please remember that everyone is trying their best to enable Mass to be as welcoming, safe, and comfortable for us all. The precautions in place are necessary, and although the environment is not as we would like it to be we just need to accept it until times change, please do not take out your frustrations on the volunteers who are trying to make a difference.

There will be no collection during Mass, the collection plates will be at the back of church near the exit, please put your donations on the plate as you leave church.

More Volunteers Needed for St Joseph's

Thank you to everyone already giving up time to steward and clean St Joseph's church so that it remains open for Sunday Mass. Currently we have just enough to cover Sundays so it is unlikely that the church will open for weekday Mass until more volunteers come forward.

Apart from the Covid cleaning that must be done on Sundays, the church still needs its floors, glass and carpets cleaned regularly. We have a small rota of people to undertake this every 3rd week. Please think of giving time on Sundays or adding your name to the normal Church cleaning rota.

If interested please give your name to Canon Michael, Shauna Devitt, or Pat Macgregor.

Toilet Facilities

We are happy to say we will be re-opening our toilets safely next Sunday thanks to the willingness of our volunteers to clean and disinfect them before and after each Mass. You can do your part to help by only using the toilets if absolutely necessary, sanitising your hands before and after use and remembering to shut the toilet lid prior to flushing. Also, we ask that you please use the disinfectant wipes provided to wipe down any place you have touched - flush handle, door handles, taps, sink etc.

Thank you for your continued co-operation and patience.



Donations

Thank you to all those who have continued throughout the pandemic to give so generously to the church. Last Sunday **£632.85** was collected after our Masses and more donations were made through bank transfers.

If you would like to continue giving through direct debit, standing order or bank transfer, the details are below.

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
St Wilfrid's
Sort Code 40-34-20
Account Number 01164120

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
St Joseph's
Sort Code 40-34-20
Account Number 31164066

To donate via cheque please make out to
'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead'
These can be posted to the parish address

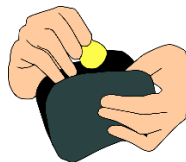
Please use the reference "Weekly Contribution"

We are continuing to raise money for the improvement of the 'Lourdes Garden' at St Joseph's, so far, we have had £300 donated, if you would like to help please use the reference 'Lourdes Garden'

Usually at this time of year **Gift Aid Donation Statements** are issued to those who are part of the scheme, however due to the strange circumstances in which we find ourselves the diocesan offices have decided to only issue such statements at the request of each individual should they want one.

If you are a Gift Aider and would like a statement of your donations you can request one by emailing the Gift Aid Office at:

gift.aid@diocesehn.org.uk or michelle.dixon@diocesehn.org.uk or
andrea.emson@diocesehn.org.uk



TRIVIA

ALE RICH YOUTHS can you unscramble the anagram?