

## Reflection Thursday Week 22 – Pope St Gregory 2020

**Gregory** was born in Rome in 540 and worked in public service like many other aristocrats. He became Prefect of the City of Rome, a post he held for some years. He founded a monastery in Rome and others in Sicily, then became a monk himself. He was ordained deacon and sent to Constantinople for five years. He was elected Pope in 590, the first monk to hold this office. He reformed the administration of the Church's estates giving the surplus to the poor and to ransoming prisoners. He negotiated treaties with the Lombard tribes ravaging northern Italy. By cultivating good relations with other barbarians, he was able to keep the Church secure. He sent Augustine and his monks as missionaries to England in 596, providing them with ongoing support. He wrote extensively on pastoral care, spirituality, and morals, and designated himself as the *"servant of the servants of God."* He died on 12<sup>th</sup> March 604.

Besides naming Peter, the leader of the Apostles and the Church, Jesus also makes it plain that nothing, absolutely nothing, will ever defeat the Church. We belong to an insuperable family. Which means that we can live our lives with confidence. This confidence is evident in the life of Pope Gregory, whom we must thank for sending Augustine here to England and for the faith we are free to celebrate. The other great lesson Gregory teaches us is not to alienate, condemn, or reject our enemies but seek to build up good relations with them, creating friendships. After all God does not alienate or punish us when we do wrong. God seeks reconciliation with us which he is only too ready to give. We have spent decades harming and destroying creation which only seeks to forgive and help us grow as members of one family. It is not too late to seek the healing of creation but we must start now. Catholic Climate Covenant states that, *"We are in a critical moment for the health of our environment, our relationships with each other, and the future of our public health, which all connect back to creation care. While we may at times feel lost, we are called to imitate God in word, spirit and deed, and St. Francis teaches us the way. The post-pandemic future is being shaped now. This is a time to heal. Through prayer, renewal and action we can unite to shape a new future that includes everyone, and life in all its forms."*

### Missing Trees . . . .

Two chaps were working in the public works department. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in.

After a while, an amazed onlooker said: *"Why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?"*

The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, *"Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-person team. But today the chap who plants the trees called in sick."*