

**St. Mary's Catholic Church**  
Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NR  
**Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)**

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## Pentecost

### Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 23	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Pentecost
Sunday 24	9.30am	Gainford	Pentecost
Sunday 24	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Pentecost
Monday 25	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<b>S. Bede the Venerable</b>
Tuesday 26	10am	Gainford	S. Philip Neri
Thursday 28	10am	Barnard Castle	<b>Christ the Eternal High Priest</b>
Friday 29	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	Ember Day
Friday 29	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 30	6.30pm	Gainford	Most Holy Trinity
Sunday 31	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Most Holy Trinity
Sunday 31	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Trinity Sunday

**Confessions:** after Mass, by appointment, or Monday 5.30-6pm, Thursday 5.30-6pm, or Saturday 10-11am

**Second collection** there will be a second collection today for the Lay Training Fund – this remains open until 14 June.

### Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 288

First Reading	<i>Acts 2:1-11</i>
Responsorial Psalm	<b>Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 103)</b>
Second Reading	<i>1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13</i>
Gospel Acclamation	<b>Alleluia, alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia.</b>
Gospel	<i>John 20:19-23</i>

## Rota

This week: Welcome – Wynn; Reader – Michael

Next week: Welcome – Wynn; Reader – Jane; Bidding Prayers – John

### **Veni Sancte Spiritus, the Pentecost Sequence**

One of the features of Mass on Pentecost is the beautiful sequence, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. This is a poetic reflection on the theme of the day (in this case the coming of the Holy Spirit); before the Reformation in England (and northern Europe more generally) there was usually a sequence every Sunday...but these were rather variable in their poetic quality, and only a few survived the Council of Trent.

Compared with the feast itself the sequence is rather new. Pentecost was already a Jewish feast, and in its new Christian form, recalling the coming of the Holy Spirit, it was already treasured by the time that Acts was written (see Acts 20:16); and as the calendar of feasts was formalised in various different traditions, all Christians marked it as major celebration. This poetic reflection, by contrast, only dates from the thirteenth century. It is most likely that it was written by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal and friend of Pope Innocent III (he is also responsible for the division of biblical books into different chapters).

The text opens with an invitation, we turn to God the Holy Spirit and ask that he comes among us today just as he did on that first Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is seen as being the 'Lord of light'. In the second stanza, the invitation is repeated with each line beginning '*veni*' (come); the loving nature of the Holy Spirit now starts to be unpacked – in a literal translations of the Latin he is called 'Father of the poor', 'giver of gifts', and 'light of hearts'. The reflection on the nature of the Holy Spirit continues, in each case the joy of the person who receives the Holy Spirit is being noted – Thou in toil art comfort sweet, for example. But the Holy Spirit isn't just presented as a delightful addition, rather as an essential for us to live well, we hear "If thou take thy grace away, nothing pure in man will stay." The invitation to 'come' which opens remains, and now we are saying how much we stand in need of the loving presence of the Holy Spirit.

The different ways in which the Holy Spirit can help us are also noted. 'Heal our wounds', 'wash the stains of guilt away', 'bend the stubborn heart and will' – in all of these we acknowledge our own faults and ask that the Holy Spirit comes to help us with them.

The text ends with a literary crescendo building up to the final moment when we ask "joys that never end", in a clear reference to entrance into heaven, as the reward for a life lived inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Pausing and reflecting on the text one can readily see why it was kept when so many other sequences were discarded. Its beauty has resulted in the nickname of 'the Golden Sequence', which we can easily see as fitting. The original Latin text is written in very short stanzas with a pleasing rhythm and gentle rhyming pattern. The text was originally to be sung, and the chant melody reflects the same gentle pattern – there are numerous recordings easily found on-line if you'd like to hear how the words and music fit together. Over the centuries many other musicians have composed settings reflecting on the words of the text in their music.

As a text it bears repeated meditation, it would indeed be a very good practice to pray it daily over the coming week, continuing to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives and reflecting gently on his work in our lives and in our world. Come Holy Spirit. – Fr. Thomas.

**Prayer List:** Among the sick of the parish, please keep John Burgess, Anthony Cole, Norah Mackay, Izzy Herbert, Alice Musto, Diedre and Pat Estall in your prayers. We pray particularly for the recently departed, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Alison Kelly, Thomas Weightman (Snr.), and Patricia Clark. If you know of others who would like to be added to the parish prayer list, please let Fr. Thomas know.

You may find the following prayer useful as a way of drawing our parish ever closer together round Our Lord. It is through his grace that we are turned from a gathering of people in the same place, into a parish, into a genuine community.

Loving Father, we the people of St Mary's Parish offer ourselves to you, to be your people in this place, to be your Church in our community, and to be instruments of peace, forgiveness and love. Help us grow in gratitude so that we can recognise and thank you for all our blessings.

Instil in us a deep sense of generosity so that we are willing to share our gifts, our talents, our time and our resources. Help us face whatever the future holds and to make new beginnings in your name.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

**Monthly giving** As part of making financial matters clear and transparent, from now on we will publish the giving to the parish on a monthly basis (as this allows standing orders to be included).

April 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £536.15

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £909.67

Total: £1445.82

Many thanks for your generosity.

**Bishop's Visitation** Bishop Stephen will be visiting Barnard Castle and Gainford for the weekend of 30/31 May. Since arriving in the Diocese he has been working his way round the various parishes so that he gets a chance to see each church and meet each community. He will celebrate both parish Masses over that weekend. Following Mass on Sunday morning, he will also formally inaugurate and bless the Garden Room.

**Churches Together service** thank you to all who help with and attended the churches together service. It was a lovely opportunity to welcome our brothers and sisters from the other Christian communities in the town and to pray and worship with them.

**Knit and natter – following Mass on Thursday** a group to spend some time in fellowship together, whilst engaging in knitting, crochet, embroidery...or indeed any other similar craft.

### **Message from Bishop Stephen – Pastoral Strategy**

Thank you to all parishes who have completed and returned their reflections as part of our diocesan pastoral strategy. I, together with others, look forward to reading and praying through your discernments in the Spirit.

We next move to a second phase as we invite local parishes to discern together in their partnerships, or with others in their neighbouring area. Information and updates will be shared on our website.

Please keep this discernment in your prayers as we seek to respond to the Lord's call to worship Him and serve our communities in a flourishing and sustainable manner.

## **Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi**

Led by Bishop Stephen

22nd – 29th October 2027

£1725 per person

Places are limited to 50 pilgrims and places are allocated on a first come first served basis with payment of the deposit securing your place.

The itinerary and booking details can be found on the diocesan website ([www.diocesehn.org.uk](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk)).

## **SVP Camp – Holy Island**

Calling all young adults 18+. Do you have a week to spare to spend on Lindisfarne this Summer helping out at the Holy Island SVP Camp? Volunteers are needed to work alongside the children who stay in the SVP purpose-built centre on the island. Weeks, 3, 5 and 6 of the Summer have 60 children ready to have a great time rock pooling, walking, arts and crafting and enjoying outdoor activities but we need more helpers to ensure they have the best time!

- Week 3 Sat 1st August - 8th August
- Week 5 Sat 15th August - 22nd August
- Week 6 Sat 22nd - 29th August

If you are interested have a look at the website <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp> or email Barbara Taws [barbarat@svp.org.uk](mailto:barbarat@svp.org.uk)

All helpers receive training and will need to be DBS checked.

**Safeguarding** The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and Diocese's policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Fiona Bissell or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0191 2433305 or at [safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk)

## **Prayer for England**

As the jubilee year has finished, we return to offering the prayer for the conversion of England at the end of Mass.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England, thy Dowry, and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee. By thee it was that Jesus, our Saviour and our hope was given unto the world; and He has given thee to us that we might hope still more. Plead for us thy children whom thou didst receive and accept at the foot of the Cross O sorrowful Mother. Intercede for our separated brethren, that with us in the one true fold they may be united to the chief shepherd, the vicar of thy Son. Pray for us all, dear mother, that by faith and fruitful in good works we may all deserve to see and praise God together with thee, in our heavenly home. Amen.