

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Solemnity of Ss. Peter & Paul

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 27	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	SS. PETER & PAUL
Sunday 28	9.30am	Gainford	SS. PETER & PAUL
Sunday 28	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	SS. PETER & PAUL
Monday 29	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>Votive</i>
Tuesday 30	10am	Gainford	<i>First Martyrs of Holy Roman Church</i>
Thursday 2	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>Votive</i>
Friday 3	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	S. Thomas
Friday 3	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 4	4pm	Middleton	Fourteenth Sunday of the Year
Saturday 4	6.30pm	Gainford	Fourteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 5	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Fourteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 5	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Fifth Sunday after Trinity

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

Second collection there is a second collection today for Peter's Pence, this will remain open next week

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 170

First Reading	<i>Acts 12:1-11</i>
Responsorial Psalm	From all my terrors the LORD set me free. (Ps. 33)
Second Reading	<i>2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 16:13-19</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Jane; Bidding Prayers – Owls Class

Next week: Welcome –; Reader – Andrew; Bidding Prayers – John

Ss. Peter and Paul – Martyrdom and Resting Places

Each year we celebrate this great feast of those two greatest apostles. We know many details of their lives, especially from their own writings in the New Testament, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, but in both cases these accounts go silent before they actually died. We know that both were in Rome at this point, Acts concludes by speaking of S. Paul's arrival in the city – he had been accused in Jerusalem and arrested, but as a Roman citizen, was able to appeal to the Emperor. He made the journey the Rome in order to be put on trial. S. Peter is more circumspect; however, he concludes his first epistle speaking of being 'at Babylon' (1 Peter 5:13), which would have been recognised as a coded reference to Rome.

There positions in Rome would have been different, S. Peter working as head of the local church (just as Pope Leo today is Bishop of the Diocese of Rome), but probably having to do so somewhat undercover. S. Paul was already in state custody, but had a measure of freedom meaning that he was 'preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered.' (Acts 28:31) Without doubt that preaching Christ was the highest concern of both of them, as it had been since Pentecost (for S. Peter) and since his conversion (for S. Paul).

Tradition relates that they were both martyred. Following the great fire of Rome in 64, Nero placed the blame on the new and little understood Christian community, launching a great persecution. It was around this time that both Apostles were killed. Tradition relates that S. Peter was crucified upside down on the spot where the obelisk now stands in S. Peter's Square. He was buried near-by, over the following years members of the Church would visit his grave in secret preserving the memory of it. Following the legalisation of the Church under Constantine, S. Peter's Basilica was built there, with the altar over his burial spot – we reflected a little on the current church building earlier this year.

S. Paul was killed around the same time, some traditions say on the very same day. Later in the first century, S. Clement I (the fourth Pope) wrote that he "had borne his testimony before the rulers" – that testimony or witness was a term used to refer to martyrdom. As he was a Roman citizen he couldn't be crucified, and it is widely believed that he was beheaded.

As with S. Peter, his burial site became a place of prayer and visits allowing Constantine to build a church there too. This was rapidly replaced with a larger church, notably larger than S. Peter's was at the time. There was a monastery attached to it, and over time the monks took over the running of the church – a role which they continue to this day. Given its location, it is known as S. Paul Outside the Walls.

From the late sixth century, Anglo-Saxon kings sent donations to help to pay for the upkeep of the Apostles' tombs, and by the late middle ages the English king was formally recognised as the protector of S. Paul Outside the Walls. Though inevitably lost at the Reformation, this link was revived with King Charles being installed as 'Royal Confrater' during his visit to Rome last year.

The church suffered a severe fire in 1823, meaning that the current building is surprisingly modern. But the link right back to S. Paul remains, his tomb in inside and was identified in 2006, with dating confirming in 2009.

These two Apostles lived long ago, but their work still continues to inspire us. But not merely as a matter of memory, they are a truly living part of Communion of Saints, and we celebrate our closeness to them even today. – 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, including Kay Green, Angela Williams, and Elizabeth Walsh and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Joe Coyle. 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).

May 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £1037.99

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £844.67

Total: £1882.66

Many thanks for your generosity.

Day for Life. On Sunday 21 June, we mark the Day for Life under the theme "The Wonder of the Child in the Womb." The theme also recognises the loss of children who died before birth and the grief of their parents. The bishops' message and prayers can be found on the Day for Life website: www.dayforlife.org The second collection will go towards the Day for Life Fund, which distributes grants to organisations that promote respect for life from conception until natural death. You can also donate online via the Day for Life website."

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).

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.

Sister Act at Carmel College. Students will be performing Sister Act: The Musical at Carmel College, Darlington, from Wednesday 8th July to Friday 10th July at 6:30pm each evening. This is a joyful, uplifting show centred around community, faith, and music, and we would love to welcome members of the wider community to support our students Tickets are available: <https://www.ticketsource.com/whats-on?q=carmel+college>

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

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

Religious Pendants At the back of church are some religious pendants which Katey and Pip Bolland have made, these are available for a donation (which will go to church funds). Thank you to Katey and Pip for such lovely work and an excellent idea.

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

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.