

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

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Fifteenth Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 11	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Fifteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 12	9.30am	Gainford	Fifteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 12	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Sixth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 13	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>S. Henry</i>
Tuesday 14	10am	Gainford	<i>S. Camillus de Lellis</i>
Thursday 16	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>Our Lady of Mount Carmel</i>
Friday 17	10am	Barnard Castle	Family Mass with S. Mary's School
Friday 17	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	<i>Votive</i>
Friday 17	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 18	6.30pm	Gainford	Sixteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 19	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Sixteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 19	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Seventh 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 for *Stella Maris* (the Church's chaplaincy to sea-farers) as today is Sea Sunday, it remains open next week

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 102

First Reading	<i>Isaiah 55:10-11</i>
Responsorial Psalm	Some seed fell into good soil and yielded its fruit. (Ps. 64)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 8:18-23</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. The seed is the word of God, Christ the sower; all who find him will live for ever. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 13:1-23</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome – Jane; Reader – Jane

Next week: Welcome – Wynn; Reader – Tom B.; Bidding Prayers – John

Second Œcumenical Council – the First Council of Constantinople

Last year we took some time to reflect on the Council of Nicaea, it was the 1700th anniversary of that profoundly important moment in the life of the Church; back in 2023 we also looked at various aspects of Vatican II, marking the 60th anniversary of the most recent Œcumenical council. Between these two great events, there have been a further 19 councils, as well as various other gatherings which attempted or have been claimed to be Œcumenical.

The second council met at Constantinople in 381, along with Nicaea and those following it, it was a major theological council; the Church was sorting out the major fundamental aspects of the Faith, and rightly for matters of such importance, a Council was the means. As you may remember, Nicaea had been called because of the Arian crisis; Arianism is the idea that Christ is not fully God, that he is secondary and subordinate to the Father. The profession of faith which Nicaea produced had not ended the controversy, and a large number of Arian sympathisers continued. Additionally, Nicaea had not spoken about the nature of the Holy Spirit; a group variously known as Macedonians (after their founder, Macedonius) or Pneumatomachi (which means, fighters against the Spirit), they claimed that the Holy Spirit was a creation of the Son, rather than a fully part of the Godhead.

Additionally, there was a split over the appointment of a new Patriarch of Constantinople, which even involved the local magistrates entering the cathedral while an attempt was being made to ordain a new Bishop there. The Emperor sought the advice of Pope Damasus, who requested that he gather a council to settle the issue of the Patriarch of Constantinople, as well as to consider the right response to the growing Pneumatomachian movement.

The Council gathered in May 381 at the new imperial capital of Constantinople. Several delegates were refused admission as they would not accept the Nicene Creed; the Council saw itself as continuing the work of the earlier council, and so those who rejected it couldn't be a part. The division caused by the Pneumatomachi was mostly in the Greek speaking parts of the Empire. In the West, Pope Damasus condemned it early on and it found comparatively little support. As such, there was little western presence at the Council, though it was always recognised by the Pope.

There was much to and fro over the position of the Patriarch of Constantinople; however, to allow calm to continue, the winning candidate, Gregory Nazianzus, resigned. He stated that the good of the Church was more important than his own position. (He is now venerated as a Saint, and as a Doctor of the Church for his own great theological work.)

The main work of the Council was to continue Nicaea's earlier work. It repeated the Nicene condemnation of Arianism, and to that added rejections of Macedonianism and Apollinarianism. Apollinarianism taught that Christ did not have a human mind, but that part of him was made up by his divinity – this involved denying that he was fully and completely human, it would also imply that our own salvation requires us to lose or at least reject our human minds.

The Council considered the position of the Holy Spirit. Nicaea had affirmed only 'we believe in the Holy Spirit'. Constantinople enlarged this part of the Creed to the words we are used to today which speaks of the Holy Spirit as being alongside the Father and Son in the Trinity. It also made some other changes to the Creed which Nicaea professed, and that amended Creed is what we profess at Mass each Sunday.

The nature of God as both one and three persons is a complex area, and so we should not be surprised that it took some time for this to be fleshed out in detail. We can give thanks for those who were willing to debate and pray about these issues so that we can have sureness in that Faith 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. 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).

June 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £831.10

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £809.67

Total: £1640.77

Many thanks for your generosity.

Family Mass. This Friday we celebrate a family Mass with S. Mary's School. This brings the academic year to a close, and is an opportunity to celebrate the year past, as well as to encourage the children looking into the future. All most welcome.

Church Open Day. We are holding an open day and garden party on Saturday 8 August, 1.30-4pm. Please spread the word and invite anybody who might be interested.

Help needed to serve afternoon tea & refreshments, to welcome visitors, help with children's crafts etc.

To volunteer, please add your name to the list at the back of church or speak with Jane Roberts or Anne-Marie Kelly.

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.

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.