

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)

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Seventeenth Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 25	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Seventeenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 26	9.30am	Gainford	Seventeenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 26	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Eighth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 27	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>Votive</i>
Tuesday 28	10am	Gainford	<i>Votive</i>
Thursday 30	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>S. Peter Chrysologus</i>
Friday 31	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	S. Ignatius Loyola
Friday 31	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 1	4pm	Middleton	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Saturday 1	6.30pm	Gainford	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 2	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 2	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Ninth Sunday after Trinity

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

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 108

First Reading	<i>1 Kings 3:5-6, 7-12</i>
Responsorial Psalm	O LORD, how I love your law! (Ps. 118)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 8:28-30</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 13:44-52</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome – Jane; Reader – Jane

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

Delving into the Scriptures – 2 Corinthians

It was a little while ago that we looked into 1 Corinthians, S. Paul had heard of some concerning activities in the local church at Corinth and wrote to correct these. A rather sharp letter at times, to address serious issues, but also providing significant teaching. 2 Corinthians comes somewhat later with other events having taken place between the two letters.

Following 1 Corinthians, S. Paul was actually able to make a personal visit to Corinth; however, this was not a pleasant visit, and it appears that a number of attacks were made on his authority over the community (probably by visitors) – he refers to this as a ‘painful visit’. After this visit he seems to have written what has been called the ‘letter of tears’ (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:4), the text of which has not come down to us.

This background helps us to see why 2 Corinthians was written as it was. After the typical opening, which notably includes reference to S. Paul being chosen by Christ himself as an apostle, S. Paul provides a defence of his actions and expresses the love for the Corinthians which motivates his writings. It also closes with a strong assertion of his position as an apostle, which no doubt arose from the attacks he had received when visiting.

Between these two sections, he gives instructions on collections to be taken for the poor among the members of the church in Jerusalem. That he takes the time to write this shows the importance of charity within the Church. Corinth was a comparatively affluent city, whereas the Christians of Jerusalem were both poorer and suffering persecutions – as we live in a comparatively affluent part of our world, this section contains much for our reflection and action today.

The large part of the letter is taken up defending S. Paul’s position. It is easy to imagine that the early Church, being so much closer to Christ, was a time of unity and peace; however, it is clear that there were significant divisions. In particular the background seems to be the ongoing debate over the ‘Judaizers’, these saw the Faith as developing from the Old Testament, and held that all Christians should still be bound by the Law given to Moses. As S. Paul’s mission was principally to the gentile world, he became a particular *bête noire*.

As he responds to the attacks which were made on him, S. Paul’s personality comes to the fore more than elsewhere – this is a personal letter written to people who actually knew him. As he defends his position, he also seeks to reassure the Corinthians of his deep love for them; he writes not to cause them more pain (compared to the letter written between 1 and 2 Corinthians).

He provides an account of the work of an apostle; this is presented as a continuation of the work of Christ. The apostles are spoken of as God’s co-workers (6:1) and ambassadors (5:20). This locating of all of the work of the apostles in God continues to be relevant to us today,

as all that we seek to do in the Church is through Him. This reaches a climax when he summarises all Christian ministry: “the love of Christ controls* us” (5:14 – *control could also be translated as ‘urges on’).

It is worth noting that there is that missing letter. Sending letters to local churches was a significant part of S. Paul’s ministry, as he couldn’t be everywhere at once. Only a few of these have been recognised as having that inspiration which marks them out for the Bible; the others have inevitably been lost to the sands of time. Regardless, we see in what remains the great passion of S. Paul, to bring everybody deeper into that love of Christ which controls him. – Fr. Thomas.

Second Collection – Sick & Retired Priests next week there will be a second collection for the support of sick and retired priests, this will be open on the weekend of 8/9 August as well.

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.

Children’s Space. It is a great joy to see an increasing number of children join us at Mass. Sometimes our younger parishioners do get restless during Mass, to try and help you may have noticed that there’s a space at the back of church with some soft furnishings, books, and toys – feel free to take children there during services if you think it would help. “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

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.

Church Cleaning to prepare the church for the open day, there will be church cleaning following Mass on Thursday (30 July). Any volunteers are most welcome.

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.