

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 29	6.30pm	Gainford	Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year
Sunday 30	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year
Sunday 30	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 31	10am	Middleton	S. Aidan
Monday 31	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	S. Aidan & the Saints of Lindisfarne
Tuesday 1	10am	Gainford	<i>Votive</i>
Thursday 3	10am	Barnard Castle	S. Gregory the Great
Friday 4	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	<i>S. Cuthbert</i>
Friday 4	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 5	4pm	Middleton	Twenty-Third Sunday of the Year
Saturday 5	6.30pm	Gainford	Twenty-Third Sunday of the Year
Sunday 6	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Third Sunday of the Year
Sunday 6	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

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

Second Collection: the annual collection for the Holy Places remains open today. This supports the Church's work in the Holy Land, caring for some of the most profound sites in Christendom.

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 123

First Reading	<i>Jeremiah 20:7-9</i>
Responsorial Psalm	For you my soul is thirsting, O LORD, my God. (Ps. 62)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 12:1-2</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which he has called us. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 16:21-27</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome – Wynn; Reader – Andrew

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

Delving into the Scriptures - Galatians

Reading through Galatians we are drawn right into the world of the early Church, and its first major dispute. In this Epistle, S. Paul isn't just dealing with whatever issues have arisen in a particular community which needs correction, he is speaking powerfully about the whole Church and what it means to be a Christian. Galatians is probably one of the earliest books of the New Testament to be written, as always scholars disagree but in terms of times this disagreement is actually quite small with dates between A.D. 48 and 60 being advocated. While the date range here is smaller than for other books, it covers a profoundly significant moment and event in the life of the Church.

The province of Galatia was in Asia Minor, it's notable that this isn't addressed a single specific community (as compared with Romans or Corinthians, for example) but to 'the churches of Galatia' and there could have been a few of them in different cities. We know from Acts that S. Paul had journeyed through the area on an evangelistic mission, and it is likely that the churches to whom he wrote are those he founded.

Notably these churches were mainly filled with newly converted gentiles. At this point in the Church's history the exact relationship between the Old Testament covenant with Israel and Christ's new covenant was still being worked out. A number of figures (sometimes called the 'Judaizers') were promoting the idea that a gentile needs to be brought into the Abrahamic covenant before being brought into the Church. This meant that converts would have to be circumcised, and would be obliged to keep the whole of the Mosaic Law (the various rules and ceremonies over purity and so forth). It seems that for many, this Mosaic Law was still seen as the basis for hope of salvation. To say that S. Paul opposed this view would be an understatement – he refers to it as 'another Gospel' (then adding 'not that there is another Gospel') and calls those who preach it 'accursed'.

It seems that the whole impetus behind the Epistle is to give reassurance to the gentile Galatians that they do not need to come under the Mosaic Law, but rather should put their trust and faith in Christ alone. The matter of gentile converts was formally settled by the Council of Jerusalem (described in Acts 15 – it is unclear whether Galatians was written before or after this council. It may be that S. Paul was writing affirming the decisions of the council; alternatively he may have been using his own authority while still awaiting the final decision of the Church.

For S. Paul there is a fundamental question – where do we put our trust? He suggests that the Judaizers were placing their trust in the fulfilment of the complex rules of the Mosaic Law; but that is ultimately impossible as that law has no power to save us, and will lead only to death. By contrast, we can and should place our trust in Christ and the work which he has done for us. It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that this is the whole message of the Epistle, and he says: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love." (5:6)

Those battles over the gentile or Jewish nature of the Church are mostly long passed. But the passion with which S. Paul writes shows the vital importance to him; and the message

is still relevant to us. The only path to salvation which we have is through trust in Christ and his working in us, inspiring us to good works as acts of love and not as rigid fulfilment of the Old Testament Law. – 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 Tom Ball and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Chris Oliver. 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).

July 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £744.46

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £799.67

Total: £1544.13

Many thanks for your generosity.

Saint Aidan's Day. Monday 30 August is S. Aidan's day, there will be an additional Mass at Middleton to celebrate the Patronal Festival, at 10am.

Tom Ball's funeral. Tom Ball's funeral Mass has been scheduled for Wednesday 9 September at 10.30am, with his body received into church on the evening before. May he rest in peace.

New Rota There is a new rota for welcomers, readers, bidding prayer writers, and refreshment organisers. Please do be generous in signing up for these different ways of helping with Sunday Mass. If you have any questions about what it involves, please speak to Fr. Thomas or to Jane Roberts.

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."

Children's Liturgy Beginning next week, we will be offering children's liturgy when Mass is on Sunday mornings. This will be during the first part of Mass, and offer teaching to them at a level more appropriate for their age; then they will come and join the rest of us for the second half of Mass. It will be for children in primary school. Please take children directly to the garden room from 9:20 onwards.

Ordinariate Masses following internal discussions, as well as consultation with the P.P.C. here as well as the Bishop, the Ordinariate Group has decided that Barnard Castle would be a more appropriate home for it. This will not replace parish Masses, though all parishioners are most welcome at Ordinariate services. The group would like to thank those who have shown such a warm welcome already.

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.

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.