

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

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
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
Monday 7	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>Votive</i>
Tuesday 8	10am	Gainford	Nativity of Our Lady
Tuesday 8	6pm	Barnard Castle	Reception of body into church
Wednesday 9	10.30am	Barnard Castle	Requiem for Tom Ball
Thursday 10	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>Votive</i>
Friday 11	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	<i>Votive</i>
Friday 11	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 12	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Fourth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 13	9.30am	Gainford	Twenty-Fourth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 13	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

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 125

First Reading	<i>Ezekiel 33:7-9</i>
Responsorial Psalm	O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts.' (Ps. 94)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 13:8-10</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 18:15-20</i>

Rota

This week: Welcomer –; Reader – Fiona

Next week: Welcomer –; Reader – Michael; Bidding Prayers –

Peter has Spoken through Leo

Last month we heard about the Council of Ephesus and the formal declaration that Our Lady is to be called Mother of God, as part of the growing understanding of who Christ is. Sadly following the Council of Ephesus the debate wasn't finished, indeed it took a sometimes violent turn.

In an attempt to defend the unity of Christ, a new theory was proposed which suggested that he had only one nature rather than continuing to have both a divine and a human nature, held together in perfect unity – many argued against this, suggesting that it would involve Christ not being fully human (because he didn't have a human nature). A council was summoned at Ephesus in 449 which upheld this position; however, during this council the legates representing Pope Leo I were prevented from reading his letter to the council. There were also a number of physical altercations, both inside and around the council's meeting. The papal legates struggled to escape from the city and return to Rome – Pope Leo declared it as a '*latrocinium*' or Council of Robbers.

To settle matters, Leo demanded that a new council be called. Eventually this gathered at Chalcedon (on the outskirts of modern-day Istanbul) in the autumn of 451. Around 520 Bishops attended (as compared with just over 100 at Ephesus), including fresh legates from Pope Leo. This time, Pope Leo's letter (known as Leo's Tome) was read out, this rejected Monophysitism (the idea that Christ had only one nature, rather than both human and divine natures). The assembled Bishops responded to the text by shouting out: "This is the faith of the fathers, this is the faith of the Apostles. So we all believe, thus the orthodox believe. ... Peter has spoken thus through Leo."

The decrees of the supposed council of Ephesus were declared to be null. A definition on Christology was issued, which has continued to be the touch-stone of the Church's understanding of how Christ can be both God and man. It affirmed that by becoming human, his eternal divine nature was joined to a human nature – both of these exist in him both inseparably and unmixed. This rejects the Nestorian idea that they are almost unrelated to each other; but also the Monophysite idea that the divine nature takes over the human and makes Christ not fully one of us.

The Council went on to issue a series of 30 canons (or laws); these were mostly about the proper ordering of the Church. Notably they deal with several points about monks, and that they should only be founded under the authority of the local bishop. As well as ordering the clergy, who were ordered to remain in their own dioceses. It seems that a significant problem was for clergy and monks to travel to Constantinople to be involved in the royal court and its politics.

It also recognised that Constantinople was now a major location for the Church, especially given that it was the capital of the Empire. The Bishop of Constantinople (later the title patriarch came into use) was to be ranked second, with only the Pope higher than him.

The decisions reached by the Council were not universally welcomed. Most of the Church in Egypt refused to accept it (how much this was a genuine theological difference, and how

much politics is still debated) breaking away to become the Coptic Church, additionally Ethiopia was attached to Egypt at the time, Armenia and portions of Syria also declined to accept the Council.

The fundamental teaching which is still relevant today is the reassertion that Christ is both fully God and fully human – these two do not mix, but are united to each other. As God he has the power to save us, and as human he saves all of our nature. – 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, and Thomas Savage in your prayers. We pray particularly for the recently departed, including Tom Ball 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).

August 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £939.92

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £834.67

Total: £1774.59

Many thanks for your generosity.

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.

Assisted Suicide Bill. As you will remember, in the last session of Parliament a bill was introduced to legalise assisted suicide. Thankfully the House of Lords did not approve it; however, it has been reintroduced and will be considered by the House of Commons on Friday. Please pray for a greater recognition of the dignity of human life. (It should be noted that our local M.P., Dr. Sam Ruthworth, opposed it last time.)

Children's Liturgy Today we have our first session of children's liturgy. This will now take place 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 is for children in primary school. Please take children directly to the garden room from 9:20 onwards (they will be safely escorted back into church during Mass).

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.

Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The month of September is SVP awareness month. The St Vincent De Paul Society (or as it is known – the SVP) is an international Catholic voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty by providing practical assistance to those in need – irrespective of faith, age or gender in other words Turning concern into action. The Society is a lay organisation initially formed in Paris in 1833 by Frederic Ozanam and active in England & Wales since 1844. It was inspired by St Vincent De Paul a 17th century priest in Paris, famed for his works with the poor. Over the month of September, we will highlight our work and the initiatives we have started. We are also holding an open meeting on 19th October in the St Augustine's Parish Centre, and all are welcome. We will remind you of this date nearer the time.

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.

Second collection for Catholic Education. Next week is education Sunday, and there will be a second collection in support of Catholic Education.

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.